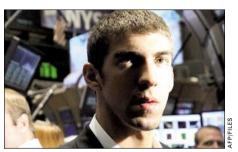
RUFF & READY: Go the extra mile (or three) to help shelter dogs exercise | Inside

express



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Tuesday



Michael Phelps was seen apparently smoking pot.

No Charges: Phelps off the hook in pot-smoking probe | 19

Taliban Truce: Pakistanis approve pact with militants | 8





Surge Begins in Afghanistan

Newly arrived U.S. troops operating in dangerous region

OGAR PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN | Close to 3,000 American soldiers who recently arrived in Afghanistan to secure two violent provinces near Kabul have begun operations in the field and already are seeing combat, the unit's spokesman said Monday.

The new troops are the first wave of an expected surge of reinforcements this year. The process began to take shape under President George W. Bush but has been given impetus by President Obama's call for

an increased focus on Afghanistan.

U.S. commanders have been contemplating sending up to 30,000 more soldiers to bolster the 33,000 already here, but the new administration is expected to initially approve only a portion of that amount. White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Monday the president would decide soon.

The new unit — the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division — moved into Logar and Wardak provinces last month,



Obama

and the soldiers from Fort Drum, N.Y., are now stationed in combat outposts throughout the provinces. Militants have attacked several patrols with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, including one ambush by 30 insurgents, Lt. Col. Steve

Osterhozer, the brigade spokesman, said.

Commanders are in the planning stages of larger-scale operations expected to be launched in the coming weeks. (AP)

Key Parts Found in Flight 3407 Crash Search



MYSTERY: Investigators comb the wreckage of Coninental Connection Flight 3407 in Clarence Center, N.Y., on Monday, near a memorial of flowers left by victims' families. Parts found Monday could help explain what led to last Thursday's crash, which killed 50 people. Clues: Pilot's actions scrutinized | Page 3



DO YOU THINK MICHAEL PHELPS GOT PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN HIS POT-SMOKING INCIDENT? @ YES @ NO



TUESDAY







TECHNOLOGY

'Bringing Down the House 2' Plot Foiled

Nevada gambling regulators have warned casinos in the state about a card-counting program that works on Apple Inc.'s iPhone and iPod Touch that illegally helps players beat the house in blackjack. Card counting itself is not illegal under Nevada gambling laws, but it is considered a felony to use devices to help count cards. The Nevada Gaming Control Board sent a memo to casinos last week warning them of the program. (AP)



DEPRESSION

Madoff Victims Can't Afford Doll Therapy

Mad at disgraced investor Bernard Madoff? There's a toy just for you. One of the vendors at this week's Toy Fair is offering Smash-Me Bernie, a \$99.95 Madoff look-alike doll that wears a devil-red suit and carries a pitchfork. It comes with its own hammer, so you can pulverize it. Phoenix, Ariz.-based ModelWorks is behind the caricature Mini-Me figures. Madoff was arrested in December after investigators said he confessed to his sons that he had swindled investors out of \$50 billion in a Ponzi scheme. (AP)



OPPOSITES

Fire and Ice

If this photo were in color, you'd know that the ice sculpture in this picture is an iridescent orange. Why? Because there's a bonfire burning in the middle of it. This handiwork by ice carver Dan Rebholtz and his crew was showcased during the during the opening ceremony for the Magical Ice Carving Festival in St. Joseph, Mich., on Friday. Dozens of ice carvers from across the Midwest gathered in St. Joseph this weekend for the festival. (EXPRESS)



Mexico wins for most kisses; the U.S. wins for most subpar greeting cards.

SAYINGS

Kiss Me — I'm Mexican

Mexico City puckered up to set a new record Saturday as nearly 40,000 people locked lips in the city center for the world's largest group kiss. Carlos Martinez of Guinness World Records verified the record of 39,897 people who entered the gated kissing area of the city's Zocalo main square. The Valentine's Day kiss was meant to show love at a time when a crackdown against drug traffickers has led to widespread violence across the country. (AP)



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The 2009 nominations deadline has been extended to March 9.





WALK OF SHAME: A man in Bellevue, Wash., made sure a pair of burglars didn't get away with his three flat-screen televisions. When Patrick Rosario heard burglars upstairs in his home, he sneaked outside and moved their getaway car to a friends' house.

Nation

Study: Teen Cholesterol Issue Minor

Doctors say less than 1 percent of teens may need drug treatment

DALLAS | Fewer than 1 percent of American teens are likely to need cholesterol drugs, says a new study that offers some reassuring news on the childhood obesity front.

Last year, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued eyebrow-

The percentage of Americans ages 12 to 17 who fit the profile for needing cholesterol medicine, the study found.

raising new guidelines: Doctors were urged to consider cholesterol drugs for more kids, even as young as 8, if they had high levels of "bad cholesterol," or LDL, along with other health problems

such as high blood pressure.

Now, a study published online Monday in the American Heart Association's journal Circulation helps allay concerns that "many, many" children might need to be on cholesterol drugs, said Dr. Stephen Daniels, lead author of the pediatric guidelines.

"The concern was, I think, because there's an increasing level in obesity, that it would lead to higher and higher cholesterol levels. They don't seem to be going up," he said.

JAMIE STENGLE (AP)



Workers remove debris Monday at the spot in Clarence Center, N.Y., where Continental Flight 3407 crashed last week, killing 50.

Officials Scour Crash Site

Plane smashed into a N.Y. home Thursday, killing 50 people in all

CLARENCE, N.Y. | Investigators have located key components that might help reveal what the pilot did to try to save Flight 3407 during its final desperate seconds, when the plane plunged to the ground so suddenly that sending a mayday was impossible, an investigator said Monday.

After a seemingly routine flight,

Though ice has emerged as a possible factor, the cause of the crash remains elusive.

the airplane endured a 26-second plunge in icy weather before smashing into a house about six miles from Buffalo Niagara International Airport Thursday night, killing 49 people on the plane and one on the ground. On Monday, families of the victims visited the site for the first time and placed roses to remember the dead.

National Transportation Safety Board member Steve Chealander said investigators have located the steering column, or yoke, of the plane; all the propeller blades; five of six deicing valves; and rubber bladders designed to protect the tail from ice.

Though ice has emerged as a possible factor, the cause has remained elusive, in part because there was no distress call from the pilot and no mechanical failure has been identified.

Chealander said Sunday the pilot appeared to ignore recommendations by the NTSB and his employer that the autopilot be turned off in icy conditions. The autopilot remained on until an automatic system warned that a stall could occur, pushed the yoke forward and shut the autopilot off.

Chealander acknowledged that it was possible that the pilot overreacted by yanking the yoke back, further destabilizing the plane, but he said that was one of an almost unlimited number of possibilities.

Kirk Koenig, president of Expert Aviation Consulting of Indianapolis, said the airplane may have been in a predicament that would challenge even the most experienced pilots.

For example, if ice were forming on the wings, the pilot would want to put the nose of the plane down and increase power; if the icing were on the tail, the opposite would have been required.

"Things happened so quickly and they were so low to the ground that it would not have mattered if Chuck Yeager and Neil Armstrong were flying the plane; there wouldn't have been a different outcome," Koenig said.

Chealander said the pilots had no time to send a distress signal.

"They were trying to save their lives and the lives of everybody on that airplane," Chealander said.



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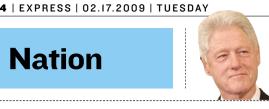
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Nation



"I think he's off to a good start."

—Former president Bill Clinton, when asked about President Obama's work since he took office Jan. 20.



Sen. Roland Burris, D-III., leaves a press conference outside Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago on Monday.

Burris Is Under Fire Again

Illinois senator denies changing testimony about Blagojevich calls

CHICAGO | Sen. Roland Burris insisted Monday that a newly released affidavit outlining contacts with ousted governor Rod Blagojevich's brother and other advisers was voluntary and not the result of contact from federal agents investigating the former governor.

"It was done because we promised the [impeachment] committee we would supplement information in case we missed anything," Burris said Monday. "End of story."

Burris released an affidavit over the weekend in which he admitted Blagojevich's brother asked him for campaign fundraising help before Blagojevich appointed Burris to the Senate.

The disclosure is at odds with Burris' testimony in January, when the Illinois House impeachment committee specifically asked whether he had ever spoken to Robert Blagojevich or other aides to the now-deposed governor about the Senate seat vacated by President Obama.

The discrepancy could mean Burris perjured himself.

But the Democratic senator

insisted Monday that the Feb. 4 affidavit was merely a promised supplement, not a contradiction, to his testimony before the committee.

"There was no change of any of our testimony," said Burris, 71. "The information that's being reported in terms of that this was done because of a fed statement is absolutely, positively not true."

The affidavit's release prompted state Republican leaders to call for Burris' resignation and a perjury investigation, while members of his own party, including Blagojevich successor Gov. Pat Quinn, say they would like a full explanation from Burris. Don Babwin (AP)

HEARSAY | FIREARMS

"If I want to protect my family, [and] if I want to have a weapon in the home, that should be my right."

-SEN. KIRSTEN GILLIRRAND. D-N.Y. REVEAL-ING SHE KEEPS TWO RIELES LINDER HER BED GILLERRAND HAS DRAW CRITICISM FROM DEMOCRATS FOR HER PRO-GUN STANCE

Officials: Fireball **Likely a Meteor**

DALLAS | The fireball that streaked across the sky and alarmed numerous Texas residents was likely just a big meteor and not wreckage from colliding satellites, experts said Monday.

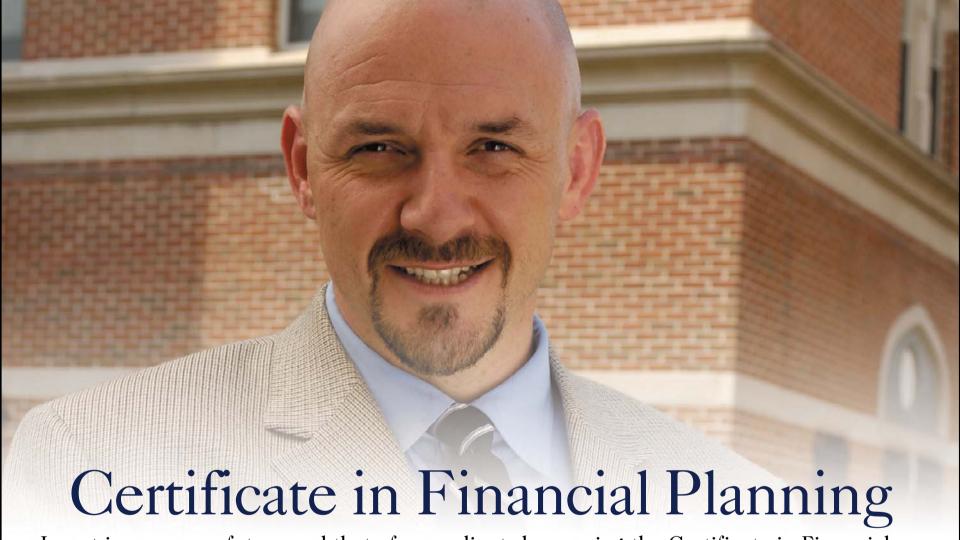
Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Roland Herwig said the fireball seen across a wide stretch of the state Sunday morning probably was a natural phenomenon and not debris from last week's collision between an Iridium communications satellite and a Russian military space vehicle.

The Williamson County sheriff's office in central Texas said it received so many emergency calls from Texans about the light in the sky that it sent deputies out in a helicopter to look for a possible lane crash. (AP)



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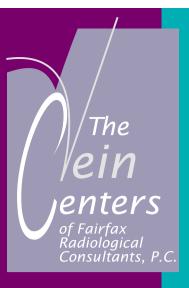
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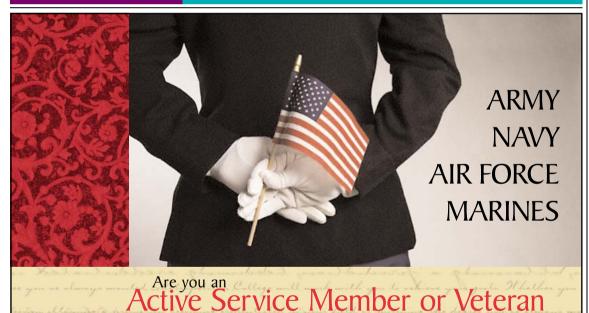
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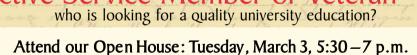
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Nation



General Motors headquarters are seen in Detroit. The company is in negotiations with the United Auto Workers and creditors as it seeks a path to financial viability.

GM Presses UAW Ahead of Deadline

Company must submit restructuring plan to government this week

DETROIT | With a governmentimposed deadline for its restructuring plan just a day away, General Motors Corp. was making progress Monday in concession talks with debt-holders and its main union. but deals may not come until after the deadline passes, said people briefed on the situation.

Talks at GM and Chrysler LLC, both of which are living off billions in government loans, continued Monday with few details emerging. Both companies must submit plans to the Treasury Department by Tuesday to show how they will repay the loans and become viable again.

Two people briefed on the GM plan reported progress toward a deal with the United Auto Workers. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because the negotiations are private.

But UAW Legislative Director Alan Reuther said Monday he does not expect labor agreements in time for Tuesday's deadline.

One of the people briefed on GM's plan said some parts, such as bondholder and labor agreements, probably won't be complete by the time the plan is submitted to the Treasury Department late Tuesday.

GM has been given \$9.4 billion in government loans and is likely to get \$4 billion more.

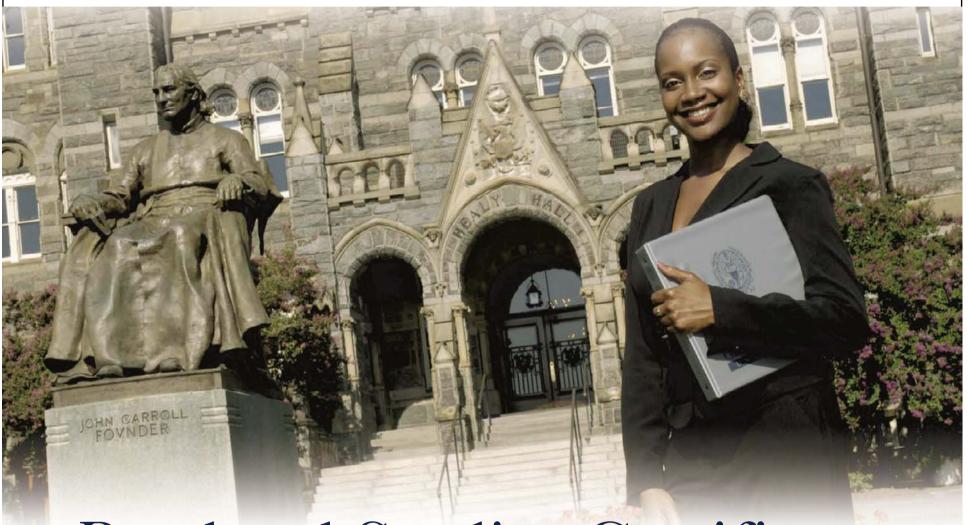
GM executives have said the company has to show only substantial progress by Tuesday, with the whole plan finalized by March 31.

GM has received \$9.4 billion in government loans and is to receive another \$4 billion if its plan is approved by the government. Chrysler received \$4 billion and could receive \$3 billion more if its plan is approved. The plans must include concessions from debtholders and unions, and substantial restructuring. (AP)



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The percentage drop in Japan's economy during the last three months of 2008, the government reported on Monday. Exports dropped a record 13.9 percent as the country sank further into its long recession.

Pakistan OKs Deal for Islamic Law

Government's accord with Taliban is met with sharp criticism

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN | Pakistan agreed Monday to suspend military offensives and impose Islamic law in part of the restive northwest, making a gesture it hopes will help calm the Taliban insurgency while rejecting Washington's call for tougher measures against militants.

One human rights activist said the accord was "a great surrender" to militants.

Elsewhere in the northwest, missiles fired by a suspected U.S. spy plane killed 30 people in a house used by an extremist commander, witnesses said. It was the deadliest of almost three dozen apparent American attacks on al-Qaeda and Taliban targets in the semiautonomous tribal lands close to the Afghan border since last year.

It is hard to view

this as anything other than a negative development."

U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL

Monday's peace agreement applies to the Malakand region,

which includes the former tourist destination of the Swat Valley, where extremists have gained sway by beheading people, burning girls schools and attacking security forces since a similar agreement broke down in August.

The new agreement intensified unease in the region. "It is hard to view this as anything other than a negative development," a senior Defense Department official said on condition of anonymity. (AP)

Clinton Kicks off Asian Tour

Secretary of state calls Japan a 'cornerstone' in 1st diplomatic tour

TOKYO | Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton arrived in Tokyo on the first stop of her Asian tour Monday night, declaring that she wanted "to create networks of partners in order to deal with the problems that no nation, even ours, can

deal with alone," such as climate change and the global economic crisis





stone of our efforts around the world" and yet again emphasized that she is making her first trip to Asia as chief U.S. diplomat to signify the importance of U.S. transpacific relationships. She is the first secretary of state in nearly 50 years to start his or her tenure with a trip to Asia.

But for Japan, even greater importance is attached to the symbolism of Tokyo's meriting the first stop on her trip. Her arrival breaks a run of bad news for the Japanese government, suffering through news of its worst economic downturn in 30 years. Glenn kessler and blaine HARDEN (THE WASHINGTON POST)

France's Role In Holocaust Is Recognized

PARIS | France's top judicial body on Monday formally recognized the nation's role in deporting Jews to Nazi death camps during the Holocaust — but effectively ruled out any more reparations for the deportees or their families.

Jewish groups welcomed the ruling by the Council of State, the clearest legal acknowledgment to date of France's role in the Holocaust. Nearly 70 years ago, the Vichy government helped deport about 76,000 people from Nazi-occupied France to concentration camps during the war. Fewer than 3,000 returned alive.

The council said the French government of the time "allowed or facilitated the deportation from France of victims of anti-Semitic persecution." (AP)

LONDON | PHOTOGRAPHERS PROTEST ANTI-TERROR LAW



CANDID CAMERA: A police officer watches as photographers take pictures at a protest in front of the Metropolitan Police headquarters at New Scotland Yard in London on Monday. The rally was against a new anti-terrorism law that went into effect Monday that could effectively bar photographers from taking pictures of police or military personnel.



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World



The British submarine HMS Vanguard is seen in this photo released on Monday.

The Vanguard collided with the French submarine Le Triomphant this month.

Submarine Crash Stirs New Concern

No one injured when British, French nuclear vessels collide in ocean

LONDON | Nuclear submarines from Britain and France collided deep in the Atlantic Ocean this month, authorities said Monday in the first acknowledgment of a highly unusual accident that one expert called the gravest in nearly two decades.

Officials said the low-speed crash did not damage the vessels' nuclear reactors or missiles, or cause radiation to leak. But anti-nuclear groups said it was still a frightening reminder of the risks posed by submarines prowling the oceans that are powered by radioactive material and bristling with nuclear weapons.

The first public indication of a mishap came when France reported in a little-noticed Feb. 6 statement that one of its submarine had struck

a submerged object. But confirmation of the accident came only after British media reported it.

France's defense ministry said Monday that the sub Le Triomphant and the HMS Vanguard, the oldest vessel in Britain's nuclear-armed submarine fleet, were on routine patrol when they collided in the Atlantic this month. It did not say exactly when, where or how the accident occurred. France said Le Triomphant suffered damage to a sonar dome and limped home to its base on France's western tip. HMS Vanguard returned to Scotland with visible dents and scrapes, the BBC reported.

"This is the most severe incident involving a nuclear submarine since the sinking of the Kursk in 2000 and the first time since the Cold War that two nuclear-armed subs are known to have collided," said Kate Hudson, head of Britain's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. (AP)

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Australian Wildfire Suspect Named

CHURCHILL, AUSTRALIA | The only person accused of lighting one of Australia's deadly wildfires was a lonely Web-surfer who liked dogs, always said "g'day" to neighbors, and was trying to find love online.

Brendan Sokaluk, a 39-year-old who reportedly once served as a vol-

unteer fighter, was named as the suspect police arrested last week, as the death toll from the wildfires edged up to 189 on Monday.

Authorities were forced to keep Sokaluk at a secret location to protect him from potential reprisal attacks after a magistrate lifted a ban on publishing his name. (AP)



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The Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services requires all large, medium, and selected small businesses as well as commercial property owners of multi-tenant facilities to file an Annual Recycling and Waste Reduction Report to show their recycling progress. Reporting deadlines are fast approaching.

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7810 Walker Drive Greenbelt, MD 1:00 PM & 6:30 PM

Registration begins 30 minutes prior to start of classes. Classes begin promptly at the scheduled time.



Local

Va. Budget Woes Worsen

Kaine says deficit has grown to more than \$3.7B, up from \$2.9B

RICHMOND | Gov. Timothy M. Kaine announced Monday that Virginia's two-year budget shortfall has grown to more than \$3.7 billion, up sharply from the previous estimate of \$2.9 billion, as the economy continues to worsen.

But Kaine told legislative leaders in a letter that the federal stimulus bill, expected to become law this week with President Obama's signature, will help offset the additional \$800 million shortfall for the two-year period that began in July 2008.

State officials estimate Virginia



Kaine

will receive \$800 million in federal funding for the Medicaid program and another \$200 million targeted to relieve the state shortfall. The state will

receive billions of dollars more from the federal stimulus package for specific areas such as public education and transportation projects.

Kaine had estimated in December that the shortfall would be \$2.9 billion, but Republican and Democratic legislators accused him of underestimating the fiscal problem.

House and Senate committees released their versions of the state's two-year, \$77 billion budget last week. The Republican-controlled House approved its budget, but the Democratic-led Senate delayed passage.

Those budgets must be revised before the General Assembly adjourns Feb. 28, as legislators consider a larger shortfall and the influx of federal aid. ANITA KUMAR (THE WASHINGTON POST)

ALEXANDRIA, VA. | PRESIDENTS DAY PARADE



READY, AIM, FIRE: Carl Gnam, center, of the First Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line flinches as reenactors fire during the parade for the George Washington Birthday Celebration Monday. The event in Alexandria is billed as the largest parade in the United States celebrating Washington's birthday.

The Lotteries

Monday, Feb. 16

Mid-day Lucky Numbers 3-5-0 Evening Lucky Numbers (Sun.) 8-0-9 Mid-day DC 4 Evening DC 4 (Sun.) Rolling Cash Five (Sun.) 13-20-28-33-35

All winning numbers are official only when validated at a lottery ticket location or a lottery claims office. Drawings that occur after Express's deadline will be published two days later.

Daily 6 (Sun.) 3-5-16-24-32-35 Bonus: 20

MARYLAND

Mid-day Pick 3	1-1-8
Evening Pick 3 (Sun.) 4-7-5
Mid-day Pick 4	6-9-2-4
Evening Pick 4 (Sun.) 2-3-4-2
Match 5 (Sun.)	6-12-29-32-33 Bonus: 39

Mid-day Pick 3	9-6-6
Evening Pick 3 (Sun.)	4-6-1
Mid-day Pick 4	3-7-2-9
Evening Pick 4 (Sun.)	2-9-2-9
Mid-day Cash 5	10-13-15-20-26
Evening Cash 5 (Sun.)	12-14-26-30-31

\$3.8B Set For Md. in **Stimulus**

WASHINGTON | Proposed reductions in state aid to Maryland schools will be more than offset by the federal stimulus measure President Obama is poised to sign, Gov. Martin O'Malley said Monday.

The latest estimates indicate Maryland will receive roughly \$3.8 billion over three fiscal years, including the current one.

Of Maryland's 24 school jurisdictions, 16 received a total of about \$69 million less in O'Malley's current budget proposal, which was submitted last month, compared to last year. Prince George's County and Baltimore city received the biggest reductions, about \$35 million and \$23 million, respectively.

"Whatever clips were received by school districts in this budget is going to be greatly offset and then some by what President Obama is going to do for us over these next 27 months," O'Malley said in a speech during African Methodist Episcopal Church Legislative Day.

Estimates show Maryland will receive \$1.1 billion for education, including allocations for special education and Title I funding, which is designed to help students from low-income families. (AP)



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Local



Antonio Torney, who was injured in the crash said, "Nobody is street-racing."

Street Racing Slows

Illegal activity has all but disappeared in Md. after fatal '08 incident

ACCOKEEK, MD. | One year after a car plowed into a crowd of onlookers during an illegal street race, killing eight people, racing has all but disappeared from the rural highways of Prince George's County and southern Maryland, police and racing enthusiasts said.

The end to the decades-long tradition can be traced to vigilant enforcement by police and still-fresh memories of the horrific crash.

"Nobody is street-racing anymore," said Antonio Torney, 31, one of those who was injured in the crash on Feb. 16, 2008.

"It used to be fun," Torney said, "but people died. You know what I'm saying? We lost friends."

Police in several counties worked together to crack down on street racing after the crash, increasing patrols near popular sites, conducting helicopter surveillance and encouraging residents to report races.

"I think you have to factor in all of that — the monitoring, the operations and the incident itself — in changing the culture," said Diane Richardson, a spokeswoman for the Charles County Sheriff's Office.

The two drivers in last year's crash — Darren J. Bullock, 21, and Tavon Taylor, 18 — face trial this year. Each is charged with eight counts of vehicular manslaughter and other offenses. (AP)

Money



A U.S. flag hangs above the Boeing 747 assembly line in Everett, Wash. Boeing is one of the most successful U.S. companies.

'Made in America' Endures

Manufacturing jobs remain a critical part of the U.S. economy

WASHINGTON | It may seem like the country that used to make everything is on the brink of making nothing.

In January, 207,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs vanished in the largest one-month drop since October 1982. Factory activity is hovering at a 28-year low. Even before the recession, plants were hemorrhaging work to foreign competitors with cheap labor. And some companies were moving production overseas.

But manufacturing in the United States isn't dead or even dying.

It's moving upscale, following the biggest profits, and becoming more efficient, just like Henry Ford did

> ···· when he created the assembly line to make the Model T. The U.S. by far

The percentage remains the world's of the American work force that leading manufacholds manufacturer by value of turing jobs goods produced. about 12.7 million It hit a record people.

\$1.6 trillion in 2007 - nearly double the \$811 billion in 1987. For every \$1 of value produced in China's factories, America generates \$2.50.

So, what's made in the USA these days?

The U.S. sold more than \$200 billion worth of aircraft, missiles and space-related equipment in 2007, and \$80 billion worth of autos and auto parts. Deere & Co., best known for its bright green and vellow tractors, sold \$16.5 billion worth of farming equipment last year, much of it to the rest of

ucts such as gas turbines for power plants made by General Electric, computer chips from Intel and fighter jets from Lockheed Martin. Household names such as GE, General Motors, IBM, Boeing and Hewlett-Packard are among the largest manufacturers by revenue. STEPHEN MANNING (AP)

the world. Then there are energy prod-

Delphi Corp. to Lay Off 800 Workers

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP, MICH. | | Nearly 800 jobs are being eliminated at the steering division of Delphi Corp. near Saginaw, Mich.

The cuts announced Monday will affect 425 hourly workers and 350 employees who are on salary at the Delphi complex in Buena Vista Township. They will kick in March 1.

"We've anticipated this for some time," said Mike Hanley, president of United Auto Workers Local 699.

Blue-collar workers who volunteer to leave will receive a severance. Workers with low seniority can leave and receive a severance or put their name on a recall list.

The white-collar layoffs are in all departments, including engineering, purchasing, manufacturing and sales. Before the cuts, Delphi's steering division had 3,600 employees. (AP)



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Sports



CLEANUP HITTER: David Ortiz says players who test positive for steroids should be suspended from baseball for the whole season. The Red Sox designated hitter says the way to clean up the game is through testing and not by taking players to court.

Perez Absent as Nats Open Camp

Southpaw says team doesn't appreciate his abilities on the mound

NATIONALS | Left-hander Odalis Perez missed the first official workout for Washington Nationals pitchers and catchers at spring training Monday, reportedly because he isn't happy with his contract. "The agreement has been signed," Nationals general manager Jim Bowden said. "We expect Odalis to honor his agreement with the club."

The pitcher and the Nationals agreed to a non-guaranteed minor league contract Feb. 5; he would get \$850,000 if he makes the major league club this season. Feb. 22 is the mandatory reporting date for major leaguers not on World



Left-handed pitcher Odalis Perez has told team officials he will not show up to spring training until the Nationals offer him a guaranteed major league contract.

Baseball Classic rosters. Players who don't report to spring training by then are subject to discipline. Perez was listed on the Dominican Republic's provisional roster; the mandatory reporting date for those players is Tuesday.

ESPN.com reported Monday that Perez wants to re-negotiate his deal.

"I prefer to sit in my house if the Nationals do not show more appreciation for my work. Appreciate my work means to increase the value of the contract and guarantee it. I will not accept any minor league contracts with no safeguards," Perez told ESPN.com.

The left-hander went 7-12 with a 4.34 ERA for Washington in 2008, throwing 159 2-3 innings over 30 starts. HOWARD FENDRICH (AP)



Always an optimist, Manny Acta has reason to see improvement. The Nationals have a legitimate power hitter this season.

Acta Sees a More Talented Bunch

Nats manager predicts increased power, better pitching this season

NATIONALS | Manny Acta leaned back in his office chair Sunday and chuckled at the question: Is this the best team the Washington Nationals have brought to spring training since he became their manager?

"Yeah, yeah. This is the first time we have a legit cleanup hitter, power guy, in our lineup. And, man, if all these guys are healthy, without a doubt — position player-wise — I

would say that," he said the day before Washington's pitchers and catchers held their first official workout.

"The bullpen, obviously, it's a challenge," he continued. "But this is" — and here Acta rapped a finger on his desk for emphasis — "I would say, the best team we've had

the three years I've been here."

Minutes later, Acta offered another rosy assessment: "This is going to be probably the best starting rotation we had the last three years."

Not that any of those pronouncements are saying all that much. After all, the Nationals went 73-89 in 2007,

This is ...
the best team
we've had ...
the three years I've
been here."

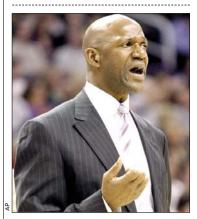
MANNY ACTA, NATS MANAGER

Acta's rookie season, enough above expectations that the team picked up his contract option for 2009.

Then the club went 59-102 in 2008, the worst record in the major leagues. As pitcher Shawn Hill put it: "Personnel-wise, we're better this year, going into camp, on paper, than we were."

Which just might mean more is expected this season from Acta, whose 2010 option has not been exercised by the Nationals. "All I can control is to manage this team to the best of my ability. And then if whoever's patience runs out, that I can't control," he said. HOWARD FENDRICH (AP)

In Brief



Terry Porter was fired on Monday, just four months into coaching the Suns.

NBA

Suns Dismiss Porter in His First Year as Head Coach

The Phoenix Suns have fired coach Terry Porter, just four months into his first season with the club and the sputtering team barely in playoff contention. Assistant Alvin Gentry was appointed interim coach. Phoenix (28-23) lost five of eight going into the All-Star break. The Suns are the eighth team to fire a coach this season, meaning more than one-quarter of the league's coaches are gone at the All-Star break. (AP)

BASEBALL

Pujols Won't Play in World Baseball Classic This Year

St. Louis Cardinals slugger Albert Pujols says he will not play for the Dominican Republic in the World Baseball Classic because of insurance issues. Pujols, who hit .357 with 37 home runs and 116 RBI for the Cardinals last season, says he regrets not being able to represent his native country in this year's WBC. He played for the Dominican team in 2006. (AP)

FOOTBALL

Jaguars Cut All-Time Rusher Taylor After II Seasons

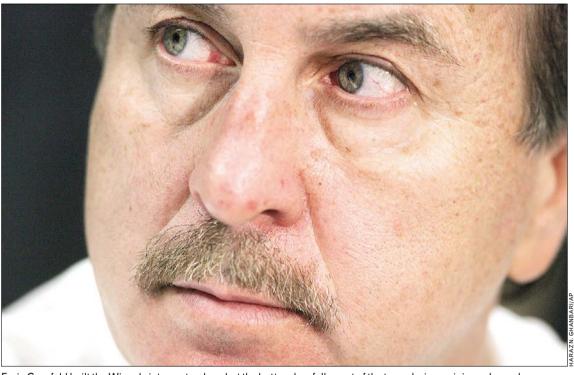
Running back Fred Taylor wanted to end his career in Jacksonville, hoping to join the small list of standout players who spent an entire career with the same team. He won't get the chance. The Jaguars released Taylor on Monday, parting ways with their all-time leading rusher after 11 seasons. Taylor, who turned 33 last month, was scheduled to make \$6 million next season. (AP)



"Winning cures a lot of things."

-Matt Kenseth, who took to cliches to explain how his Daytona 500 victory on Sunday offset not winning a Cup race in 2008.

Sports



Ernie Grunfeld built the Wizards into contenders, but the bottom has fallen out of the team during an injury-plagued season.

Disaster Management

Grunfeld's decisions face new scrutiny with the Wizards' descent

WIZARDS | Ernie Grunfeld's plan was to sprinkle talented youngsters and veteran role players around a core of three star players. Then he would watch the team progress deep into the playoffs, perhaps to a long-awaited second NBA championship.

Instead, the Washington Wizards are coming out of the All-Star break with an 11-42 record, and Grunfeld, the team president, is facing major questions about the direction of the team he built.

After four straight playoff appearances and a string of All-Star Game appearances by Gilbert Arenas, Caron Butler and Antawn Jamison, the team's descent this season has been dizzying.

One rival general manager, who spoke on the condition of anonym-

PICK 'EM Grunfeld has been hit-and-miss with his first-round draft choices:



Pecherov The 2006 draft pick (18th overall) averages 3.6 ppg. Celtic Rajon Rando was taken at No. 21.

Oleksiy



Nick Young The 16th overall pick in 2007 is a streaky scorer who is averaging 10.8 ppg in his second season.



JaVale McGee The 2008 pick (18th overall) is averaging 6.3 ppg. The 7-foot center is considered to have vast potential.

ity, said the Wizards' struggles this season can really be boiled down to the absence of Brendan Haywood (injury), Roger Mason (a free-agent departure) and Antonio Daniels (traded away).

A rival scout, who also requested anonymity, put it this way: "No knock on those guys, because under the right circumstances they can help a team. But let's be honest: If you're starting Mike James, Darius Songaila and Dominic McGuire, how good are you?"

The possible silver lining is that Grunfeld is getting plenty of opportunity to evaluate the youngsters as they play meaningful minutes, and the team will have a good chance at landing a high pick in the draft.

Possible top picks in this year's draft include Oklahoma forward Blake Griffin, Connecticut center Hasheem Thabeet, Spanish point guard Ricky Rubio and Arizona State guard James Harden. IVAN CARTER (THE WASHINGTON POST)

A rough year | Grunfeld's moves in 2008

July 1 Re-signed Antawn Jamison for \$50M. Jamison is averaging 21 ppg.

July 7 Re-signed Gilbert Arenas to a \$111M deal. He hasn't played this season.

July 11 Let Roger Mason go. He is averaging 12 ppg for the Spurs.

Nov. 24 Fired head coach Eddie Jordan after a 1-10 start to the season.

Dec. 10 Traded Antonio Daniels as part of a three-team midseason deal.

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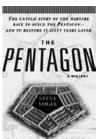
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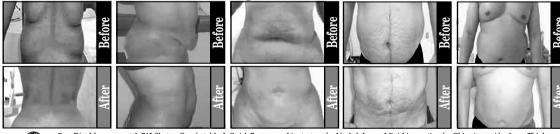
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Sports



D.C. United co-owner Victor B. MacFarlane, left, announced plans to work out an agreement with Prince George's County to build a stadium in Largo, Md., Monday.

D.C. United Eyes Md. Stadium Site

Team officials promote a bill for a 24,000-seat facility in Pr. George's

SOCCER | D.C. United took its search for a new home on Monday to Maryland, where team officials appeared with politicians who have introduced a bill that would build a new stadium in Prince George's

"Our search for a stadium of our own has been a long and arduous one," team president Kevin Payne said. "The introduction of this legislation is a great step toward achieving that dream."

The bill, if approved by the Maryland legislature, would authorize a 24.000-seat stadium at a cost of \$180 million to \$195 million. United said the project would pay for itself, with the team paying part of the tab and the rest coming from new revenue generated locally.

"We will bring a significant economic development project without burdening the taxpayers," said Democratic Sen. Anthony Muse of Prince George's County. "Not only are we gaining a new business and professional sport in the county and state, but we are bringing jobs and ongoing economic benefits to our neighborhoods."

United's goal is to break ground this year and complete work in time for the 2012 MLS season. United has played at D.C.-owned RFK Stadium since the team's inception in 1996, but the team says it needs its own modern facility to generate more revenue. (AP)

TODAY'S TV LINEUP

TERPS MEN'S HOOPS (7:30 P.M. ON ESPN2)

Are the Terps for real, or is the recent surge an anomaly? Find out when they

WIZARDS (7 P.M. ON CSN) Since they can't cut the season short, the Wizards start the second half of the year against the Minnesota Timberwolves.

MEN'S COLLEGE HOOPS (7 P.M. AND 9 P.M. ON

ESPN) Big 10 powers Michigan State and Purdue square off, followed by Kentucky versus Vanderbilt.

MORE MEN'S COLLEGE HOOPS (8 P.M. ON

MASN) Marguette tries for a secondstraight win in the Big East when facing

NHL (7 P.M. ON VERSUS) Northeast Division rivals Buffalo and Toronto face off.

Sports

S.C. Won't Charge Phelps in Pot Case

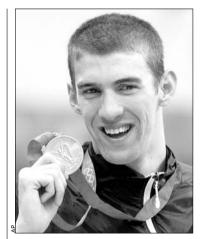
Sheriff says there isn't enough physical proof against Olympic hero

POT-GATE | A South Carolina sheriff said Monday he was not going to charge swimmer Michael Phelps after a photo of the 14-time gold medalist showed him smoking from a marijuana pipe.

Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said during a news conference that he didn't have enough physical evidence to charge the swimmer, but he defended his investigation. "Michael Phelps is truly an American hero ... but even with his star status, he is still obligated to obey the laws of our state," Lott said.

Phelps released a statement after the sheriff's decision.

"I'm glad this matter is put to rest. But there are also some important lessons that I've learned," Phelps said in the statement. "For me, it's all about recognizing that I used bad judgment and it's a mistake I won't make again. For young people especially — be careful about the decisions you make. One bad decision can really hurt you and



Michael Phelps won't face jail time after an investigation into marijuana use.

the people you care about."

The photo showed Phelps smoking from a marijuana pipe at a party in November when he visited the University of South Carolina. Lott said he seized the marijuana pipe, known as a bong, that was in the photo but couldn't prove Phelps had smoked from it.

"We had a photo and him saying he was sorry for inappropriate behavior. He never said, 'I smoked marijuana.' We didn't have physical evidence," Lott said. SEANNA ADCOX (AP)

CYCLING | CALIFORNIA DREAMING



TOUR DE FORCE: Cyclists race after crossing the Golden Gate Bridge during the second of eight stages of the Tour of California on Monday in San Francisco. Thomas Peterson won the stage. Lance Armstrong is in fifth place.



Enjoy greater comfort and energy savings this winter.

Some people call it nesting—the simple act of enjoying your home. When winter comes, you want that nest, your home, to be warm and cozy. But you also want to keep energy costs in line.

Washington Gas has a few simple things you can do that can help save money on your winter heating bills, without giving up the comfort you want.

- Have a licensed natural gas contractor perform a complete inspection of your heating and water heater systems
- Set your thermostat comfortably low in winter and consider installing a programmable thermostat. Setting your thermostat set just one degree lower can save you as much as 3 percent.
- Install proper insulation in your home.
- When you're not using a fireplace, close the flue.
- Replace your furnace filter once a month.
- Turn your hot water heater down to warm or low, never more than 120 degrees.
- Replace all cracked or broken window glass, consider adding storm windows, caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows.
- Wash full loads of laundry and dishes.

For more information and additional energy saving tips visit washingtongas.com.

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With the Washington Gas Budget Plan, you'll be able to spread the higher cost of winter heating into the warmer months. You'll pay the same amount each month for natural gas. It costs nothing to enroll. To sign up for The Budget Payment Plan, call 703-750-1000 or log on to washingtongas.com.



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"Personal Tech" can give you cool and useful tools. **Mondays.**



Entertainment

AMERICA'S BLOODY VALENTINE'S DAY: The revival of "Friday the 13th" easily took the No. 1 spot at the North American box office this weekend, setting a new record for a horror opening, with estimated sales of \$42.2 million.





THE FINAL ROUND: "Wrestler" star Mickey Rourke is considered a front-runner in this Sunday's race for the best actor Oscar.

Leading Men

Get a glimpse of the Oscar nominees for best actor this year

AWARDS | In crowning a best actor, the Academy is facing a dramatic choice: Does it heap more validation on a man who is considered one of the leading actors of his generation, or does it welcome back a prodigal son?

Just four years apart in age, Sean Penn and Mickey Rourke followed very different paths to their pending appointment at the Kodak Theatre.

Penn — though he resists playing the Hollywood game — has put his own bad-boy days behind him, reliably turning in intensely serious performances year after year. He shows a whole different side of himself in "Milk." It's not that he

so convincingly takes on a gay role as activist Harvey Milk; it's that he conveys such a buoyant lightness of spirit.

Then again, if it's an emotional moment the Academy wants, it only has to invite Rourke to the stage. He proved that at the Golden Globes where he was abashed, grateful, crude and whacky all at once in accepting his win that night. There's no question that

Rourke's self-lacerating comeback performance in "The Wrestler" is the most dramatic tale of this awards season.

Rourke was hailed as a rising star after films such as 1981's "Body Heat" and 1982's "Diner." But his career veered off course, stumbling in and out of the boxing ring, resulting in a bad picture here and there just for the cash. If the Academy is in a mood to extend its absolution, then Rourke's prayers will be answered.

Brad Pitt offers the most star appeal of any of the male nominees, although in his backwardaging performance in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," he puts much of his charisma on hold. To his credit, he turns in a quietly reflective portrait — a far cry from the twitchy mental patient in "Twelve Monkeys."

Certainly, Frank Langella gets to work himself up into a sputtering rage as the cornered Richard Nixon in "Frost/Nixon." Langella won a Tony for playing the role onstage, which suggests to Oscar voters that attention must be paid; but it could also suggest attention has already been paid.

Richard Jenkins, playing a widowed professor who befriends an immigrant couple in "The Visitor," is probably the classic case of a performer for whom it is an honor just to be nominated. A respected actor who's been working steadily since the early 1970s, for Jenkins, the nomination is its own reward. GREGG KILDAY (THE HOLLY-WOOD REPORTER)



Mandell comes into her own edgy vibe by channeling Blondie and the '60s.

'Artificial' Is Totally For Real

Eleni Mandell's strong vocals meet dynamite songwriting on 'Fire'

MUSIC | From the first few bars, which feature a punky guitar riff, it's clear Eleni Mandell's music is taking a new turn on "Artificial Fire." The addition of guitarist Jeremy Drake is the big change, bringing an edgy hook to nearly every song and allowing Mandell to expand her already impressive musical palette.

The Los Angeles songwriter channels Blondie on the back-to-back tunes "Bigger Burn" and "Little Foot." "Needle and Thread" also would have won applause at CBGB's, and D.J. Bonebrake's vibes make "Front Door" sound like something by his old band, X.

There's also plenty of the sultry singing that distinguished Mandell's 2007 release, "Miracle of Five."

She needs only a single chord to pull off the trancelike "God Is Love," and "Don't Let It Happen" is the sort of ballad that would make Dusty Springfield and Burt Bacharach proud. "Right Side," with horns and a great guitar solo by Drake, also sounds like a lost 1960s gem.

Elsewhere, the album rocks, but Mandell rarely raises her voice. With songs this good, there's no need to shout. Steven wine (AP)

'American Idol's' Drama Queen

Chatty, bratty Tatiana Del Toro isn't afraid to get in America's face

TELEVISION | In high school, everyone knew someone just like Tatiana Del Toro.

She's at the nexus of every fight, the center of every scandal — she's a chaos-bringer, seeing each scuffle with others as a chance to bring attention to herself.

During her audition, she offered

nightout

Find out more about Tatiana's
"Idol" role by reading our previous
recaps. And check back Wednesday
and Thursday for reviews of all of this
week's "Idol" action. | ONLINE NOW

EXPRESSNIGHTOUT.COM/IDOL

some eye-popping pictures to judges Simon Cowell and Randy Jackson to ease her way into the Hollywood round (you can see 'em yourself on



Contestant Tatiana Del Toro is tough to recognize with her mouth closed.

Google, but don't do it at work). Since then, she's annoyed the judges, fellow contestants and the audience.

But here's why Del Toro could be a wild card: Her voice isn't so bad. And she's pretty. And she's bound to be a darling of the Votefortheworst. com crowd — the folks who lobby quite effectively to keep less-popular "Idol" contestants alive.

Hey, it worked for Sanjaya. See how Del Toro fares — and whether she melts down — tonight at 8 on Fox. Greg Barber (Express)

Entertainment

The Mighty Rise

Morrissev is on top with his best album in more than 10 years

MUSIC | It's hard to think of Morrissey as anything but gloomy. Maybe it was the weather in his native north of England or maybe it was a rough adolescence, but it takes a special sort of talent to make a successful career out of songs with titles such as "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now" and "We Hate It When Our Friends Become Successful."

It's been more than 20 years since Morrissey's influential band the Smiths broke up. Guitarist Johnny Marr turned up Stateside to play with Modest Mouse and British band the Cribs, and drummer Mike Joyce and bassist Andy Rourke both DJ and play in various bands. But it was Morrissey who, not surprisingly, went on to do great (and not so great) things with his solo career, and he did it all using the same formula: using self-deprecation and hiring

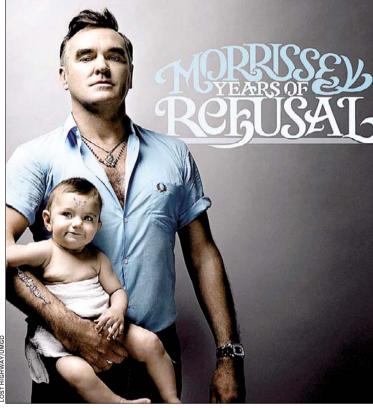


To read more of this review and watch Morrissey music videos, including "I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris," visit our Web site. **ONLINE NOW**

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great talent. During the late '80s and early '90s, he put out some of his best work ("Viva Hate." "Your Arsenal," "Vauxhall and I") before producing a string of somewhat lackluster recordings.

"Years of Refusal," Morrissey's ninth studio album, is his best recording since 1994's "Vauxhall" and sees a glorious return to top form for an artist who continues to have a place in pop culture, especially in the U.K. — the British recordbuying public alone keeps the wellcoifed Morrissey in hair products, and his songs have been used in the U.S. in advertisements for cars and, puzzlingly, the NFL.



DON'T WORRY, BE SAD: Part of Morrissey's charm is his never-ending bout of depression, which, thankfully, stuck around for the recording of "Years of Refusal."

Produced by Jerry Finn (who worked on Morrissey's 2004 LP "You Are the Quarry") and featuring guitarist-songwriters Boz Boorer and Alain Whyte, long-time Morrissey collaborators, and ex-Red Hot Chili Peppers guitar player Jesse Tobias, the instrumentation on "Years" is energetic and thrilling, not unlike Morrissey's voice, which sounds stronger here than on any recording he's put out in awhile.

Morrissey appears as his lessthan-cheery self on the album's punchy opener, "Something is Squeezing My Skull." "I'm doing very well/I can black out the present and the past now/I know by now you think I should have straightened myself out," he belts out, before rattling off the names of a half-dozen antidepressants (it's worth noting that Morrissey has lived in Los Angeles since the late '90s — no man in Manchester would never be that up-to-date on his medication).

"Black Cloud," a song of unrequit-

ed love — awash with sultry, surfy guitars — is followed by the album's first single, "I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris," a poppy little number, complete with tambourine, that contains the best Morrissey-ism of the album, "Nobody needs my love/ Nobody wants my love/Yes, you made yourself plain/Yes, you made yourself very plain," he says in his trademark melodramatic phrasing.

Fans will remember "All You Need Is Me" and "That's How People Grow Up" from last year's "Greatest Hits," and there's a tremendous moment in between with the Ennio Morricone stylings of "When I Last Spoke to Carol," with its sinister, gusty mariachi sound.

The weather in L.A. is a lot better than it is in England, that's for sure, but let's hope Morrissey never cheers up — he's far too entertaining the way he is. EWA BEAUJON

→ Warner Theatre, 513 13th St. NW; March 14, \$49.50-\$59.50; 202-783-4000. (Metro Center)

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Entertainment



JUMPING THE GUN: Jimmy Fallon talked Friday about his upcoming gig hosting NBC's "Late Night" from New York Fashion Week. "I sat in my actual chair tonight," said Fallon, who takes over the show March 2 from Conan O'Brien.

The Softer Side of Asobi Seksu

On 'Hush.' the indie duo stifles the noise for an eerie quietness

MUSIC | A lineup rotation certainly has taken its toll on Asobi Seksu; its latest, "Hush," is almost a whisper compared to the denseness of 2006's "Citrus." At its core, the group has always been singer-keyboardist Yuki Chikudate and guitarist James Hanna — they've used a different rhythm section on each of their three albums — but this lineup in particular seems miles away from the group that wore its love for My Bloody Valentine on its sleeve just a few years ago.

FOR ASOBI SEKSU video and MP3s, visit Expressnightout.com.

With "Hush," Asobi Seksu more closely resembles the dream-pop of the Cocteau Twins than the shoegaze of MBV or Slowdive. The lead single, "Me & Mary," comes closest to re-creating the sonic assault of earlier albums — particularly with its climactic ending of drums that escalates into a cascade of distor-

The memory of "Citrus" is hard to shake; over almost every track hangs the unrealized anticipation of a fuller guitar tone. The sparser instrumentation makes the thinness of Chikudate's voice more



Yuki Chikudate and James Hanna hold back on their recently released CD, "Hush."

apparent; she sounds really small on "Gliss" without layers of sound beneath her, and her transitional keyboard melodies squeak out like warbles.

Even still, there are a few moments of brilliance here: the shimmering "Sunshower" starts out as a straightforward pop song but rises from its traditional, tapering ending with a two-minute chilling coda that pairs Chikudate's soaring sighs of "whooooaaaa-oooh" with crescendoing instrumentation. Asobi Seksu's music works best when you can't quite tell what Chikudate is singing her voice blends into the instruments on the reverb-soaked "Mehnomae," and the result is wistfully airy. Catherine Lewis

→ Rock and Roll Hotel, 1353 H St. NE; March 28, 9:30 p.m., \$12; 202-388-7625.





Adv. Tix on Sale TYLER PERRY'S: MADEA GOES TO JAIL

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20000 Century Blvd

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SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) - ID REQ'D

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Adv. Tix on Sale JONAS BROTHERS CONCERT - 3D

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HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG-13)

PLEASE GIVE ME A HOME!

on the couch. 5 yrs. old, Snowy is very laid back and likes to simply relax and watch the fishes in the aquarium while sitting on a lap. Although she came to PAW with another cat, Snowy would love to be an only kitty.













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DIGITAL PRESENTATION

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10. 9:00. 9:45 THE INTERNATIONAL (R) 3:25, 6:25, 9:25

CORALINE (PG) 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:35
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THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG13) 2:10, 6:05, 9:40

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AMC COLUMBIA MALL 14

DIGITAL 3D

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LOEWS GEORGETOWN 14 3111 K Street, N.W.

DIGITAL 3D

CORALINE 3D (PG) 1:45, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45 CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) \(\square\) 1:15, 2:30, 4:00, 5:15, 6:45,

750, 930, 1020
FIBIDAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) ✓ 1:15, 3:30, 5:55, 8:05, 10:25
THE INTERNATIONAL (R) ✓ 1:20, 4:20, 7:15, 10:20
HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:30, 4:35, 7:30, 10:30
THE PINK PARTHER 2 (PG) 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:05
PUSH (PG13) 2:10, 4:55, 7:35, 10:10

TAKEN (PG13) 1:00. 3:20. 5:40. 8:00. 10:25 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG13) 1:10.8:10

INTECONIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUITON (PG13)

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (R) 505
SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 1:50, 445, 725, 10:30
SILUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 1:50, 445, 725, 10:30
THE WRESTLER (R) 1:40, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

FIANCE (R) 9:50 PM RAN TORINO (R) 1:05. 4:05. 6:50 HE READER (R) 1:35, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15 -SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT No passes or discount coupons

AMC POTOMAC MILLS 18

DIGITAL 3D

CORALINE 3D (PG) 1:50, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45

DIGITAL PRESENTATION PUSH (PG13) 2:20, 5:05, 7:40, 10:20

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) \(\square\) 1:30, 2:25, 4:10, 5:10, 6:45,

DAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) \(\sqrt{1:35, 2:30, 4:00, 5:00, 6:30, 7:30, 9:15.}

1009
THE INTERNATIONAL (R) ✓ 1:10, 4:05, 7:00, 9:50
THE INTERNATIONAL (R) © ✓ 1:10, 4:05, 7:00, 9:50
HES_UST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 12:05, 1:15, 3:05, 4:15, 8:10, 7:15, 9:30, 10:15

7.15, 3.50, 10.15
THE PINK PANTHER 2 (PG) 1:25, 2:15, 3:50, 4:50, 6:25, 7:25, 9:00, 10:00
NEW IN TOWN (PG) 2:45, 5:25
TAKEN (PG13) 2:35, 4:55, 7:20, 9:40

THE UNINVITED (PG13) 12:45, 3:10, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (R) 7:55, 10:20

HOTEL FOR DOGS (PG) 2:00, 4:35
PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG) 1:55, 4:20, 6:55, 9:20

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 12:50, 3:40, 6:35, 9:35

PERIAMOE (P) 3:40, 10:36 **DEFIANCE (R)** 7:10, 10:10 **GRAN TORINO (R)** 1:05, 3:55, 6:50, 9:55

AMC COURTHOUSE PLAZA 8 Courthouse and Birch Rd. 703-998-4AMC

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) ✓ 2:30, 5:10, 7:40 FRIDAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) ✓ 2:15, 4:30, 6:50 **HE INTERNATIONAL (R)** ✓ 2:10, 5:00, 7:50 **CORALINE (PG)** 2:20, 4:40, 7:00

HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:30, 4:20, 7:20 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG13) 7:10 - AMC SELECT

MILK (R) 4:10 THE READER (R) 2:00, 4:50, 7:30

MAGIC JOHNSON CAPITAL CENTRE 12 800 Shopper's Way, Largo 301-324-4220

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) 1:35, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30 FRIDAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) 12:05, 1:30, 2:30, 4:05, 5:00, 6:30, 7:30, CORALINE (PG) 12:05. 2:25. 4:55. 7:25. 9:55

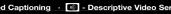
CORALINE (PG) 1205, 225, 455, 725, 955
30 NOT AWALABLE FOR THESE SHOWTIMES
HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:05, 4:10, 7:05, 1:0:05
THE PINK PARTHER 2 (PG) 1:25, 425, 6:0:0, 9:20
PUSH (PG13) 1:10, 4:15, 7:10, 9:40
TAKEN (PG13) 1:10, 4:15, 7:10, 9:40
HOTEL FOR DOSS (PG) 12:25, 255, 5:25, 7:55, 1:0:05
UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (R) 7:40, 10:10
HOTEL FOR DOSS (PG) 12:10, 2:40, 5:10
NOTORIOUS (R) 10:15 PM
PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG) 12:20, 2:35, 4:50, 7:15, 9:45
NOT EASILY BROKEN (PG13) 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45

LOEWS SHIRLINGTON 7

2772 South Randolpl 703-671-0910 801

NARY ROAD (R) 1:55. 4:50. 7:30 REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (R) 1:55, 4:50, 7:30 SLUMBOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 12:15, 2:55, 5:35, 8:20 THE WRESTLER (R) 12:45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:15 THE READER (R) 1:25, 4:20, 7:15 DOUBT (PG:13) 2:05, 4:40, 7:05 RACHEL GETTING MARRIED (R) 2:00, 4:55, 7:45

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DIGITAL 3D

CORALINE 3D (PG) 12:45, 3:10, 5:45, 8:05, 10:30

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) ✓ 1:30, 2:30, 4:05, 5:15, 7:00,

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10:30
THE INTERNATIONAL (R) ✓ 1:25, 4:20, 7:30, 10:20
HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PGT3) 1:10, 4:15, 7:35, 10:45
THE PINK PANTHER 2 (PG) 12:35, 2:50, 5:05, 7:40, 9:55
PUSH (PGT3) 1:225, 3:00, 5:40, 8:15, 10:50

NEW IN TOWN (PG) 1:20 TAKEN (PG13) 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:50, 10:15 THE UNINVITED (PG13) 2:55, 5:25, 7:45, 10:10 INKHEART (PG) 12:30 PM UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (R) 8:10, 10:25

HOTEL FOR DOGS (PG) 12:55, 3:20, 5:50 PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG) 12:40, 3:15, 5:35, 7:55, 10:40 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (PG13) 7:25, 10:55

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) □ □ □ 140, 425, 7:15, 10:05
GRAN TORINO (R) 4:00, 7:10, 9:55

AMC MAZZA GALLERIE

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) ✓ 2:30, 4:50, 7:30 FRIDAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) ✓ 3:00, 5:20, 7:50 CORALINE (PG) 1:50, 4:20, 7:00 30 NOT AVAILABLE FOR THESE SHOWTIMES
HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:10
THE PINK PANTHER 2 (PG) 2:10, 4:40, 7:40
TAKEN POR 2:20, 2:20, 2:20, 2:40, 7:40

FROST/NIXON (R) 7:20 GRAN TORINO (R) 1:40, 4:30

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DIGITAL 3D

CORALINE 3D (PG) 1:55, 4:30, 6:55, 9:20

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) ✓ 1:00, 2:25, 3:30, 5:05, 6:15, 7:35, 9:00, 10:15 CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) © ✓ 2:25, 5:05, 7:35, 10:15 FRIDAY THE 13TH (2009) (R) ✓ 1:05, 2:15, 3:25, 4:40, 5:55, 7:15, 8:25,

THE INTERNATIONAL (R) ✓ 2:05, 4:55, 7:45, 10:35

THE INTERNATIONAL (R) ✓ 2:05, 4:55, 7:45, 10:35

HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:15, 2:30, 4:15, 5:30, 7:20,

8:35, 10:20 THE PINK PANTHER 2 (PG) 1:10, 2:35, 3:30, 4:50, 6:00, 7:25, 8:30, 9:40,

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PUSH (PG13) 1:35, 4:00, 7:05, 9:45
NEW IN TOWN (PG) 1:30, 3:50
TAKEN (PG13) 1:40, 4:25, 7:00, 9:25
THE UNINVITIED (PG13) 6:10, 8:20, 10:30
UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS (R) 2:00

HOTEL FOR DOGS (PG) 123, 350

PAUL BLART: MALL COP (PG) 120, 335, 550, 805, 1025

REVOLUTIONARY ROAD (R) 630, 9:15

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 2:10, 500, 7:55, 10:40 GRAN TORINO (R) 4:20, 7:15, 9:55 THE READER (R) 1:50 4:45 7:40 10:35

LOEWS WHITE FLINT 5 North Bethesda 1-800-FANDANGO #741

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC (PG) 2:15, 4:55, 7:40
THE INTERNATIONAL (R) 2:00, 4:50, 7:30
HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU (PG13) 1:55, 4:45, 7:35

AMC SELECT.

FROST/NIXON (R) 4:40 SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE (R) 1:50. 4:30. 7:25 GRAN TORINO (R) 2:10. 7:2

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Television

CULTURE SHOCK: ABC is in negotiations to say salam to "Funny in Farsi," a comedy pilot based on a memoir by Firoozeh Dumas. The project is inspired by Iranianborn Firoozeh's experiences growing up in Newport Beach, Calif., in the 1970s.



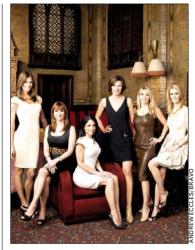
Vapid 'Housewives' Return

Bravo sacks viewers with another dose of wealth without class

TASTELESS | "The Real Housewives of New York City" (11 p.m., Bravo) is now entering its second season. Many parts of these well-preserved women fail to qualify as "real." They wouldn't know how to be a "Housewife" if their charge cards depended on it, and they seem to inhabit a Hollywood producer's idea of "New York City."

Perhaps that explains why so much of the season opener takes place on Long Island. It reminds me of the old "SNL" take on Woody Allen's "Manhattan," starring an outrageous Gilda Radner in a spoof called "Manhasset."

The unreality or meta-reality of



These New York ladies excel at gossining, acting catty and being frivolous.

"Real" hits you almost immediately. Apparently, there has been a spat between characters (whose names I refuse to learn) that has spilled onto the pages of New York Magazine and the New York Post. We are offered a glimpse of several trying to make peace over the telephone or at least feigning an approximation of peacemaking.

One couple shares their most intimate moments with the audience. No, it's not what you think. In an invasion of a child's privacy worthy of "Jon & Kate," we watch the parents read bilingual bedtime stories as they tuck in their perfect little darlings.

Some of the women (ex-models among them) claim to have written books, but they are never seen reading them. Nobody discusses culture or politics or sports. Any subject beyond the twin pillars of gossip and shopping might as well be quantum physics. KEVIN MCDONOUGH (UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE)

ON TV TONIGHT

PREPARE YOUR EARS

The first dozen semi-finalists perform on AMERICAN IDOL (8 p.m., Fox).

ANTI-'REAL HOUSEWIVES'

The "Frontline" (9 p.m., PBS) presentation INSIDE THE MELTDOWN is a momentby-moment account of the tsunami of toxic debt that slammed Wall Street last September.

HIGH PRICE OF GOLF

A country club's leading lady pays the ultimate dues on THE MENTALIST (9 p.m., CBS).

CHOO. CHOO!

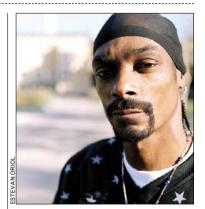
Locomotives must be cleaned on DIRTY JOBS (9 p.m., Discovery). This is Mike's 200th assignment.

TALK DOGG

Snoop Dogg gets his own talk show, DOGG AFTER DARK (9 p.m., MTV).

REFLIND PLEASE

Self-defense lessons prove fruitless for two victims on WITHOUT A TRACE (10 p.m., CBS).



Snoop is in the driver's seat on the premiere episode of "Dogg After Dark."

BOXY WITH THE STRIPPER POLE

A mugging outside a gentlemen's club yields a surprising suspect on LAW & ORDER: SVU (10 p.m., NBC).

INDIF DARI ING

Jay Leno hosts Andrew Bird on THE TONIGHT SHOW (11:35 p.m., NBC), KEVIN MCDONOLIGH (LINITED FEATURE SYNDICATE)

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IN MOURNING: Flowers and a card decorate the now-demoted effigy of Pluto outside the National Air and Space Museum.

The Planet That Wasn't

Help Pluto drown its birthday sorrows with happy hour specials

It's been more than two years, but it still hurts when you think about it. One day, Pluto was a planet. The next, it was cruelly reclassified by some callous scientist who didn't understand how much that little ninth planet meant to you.

Well, fight back! Celebrate the 79th anniversary of the discovery of Pluto — it's tomorrow, but you're concentrating on space, not time — by raising a glass to a little hunk of rock that just wasn't good enough for the International Astronomical Union.

Your first stop will, of course, be the Science Club. Tonight from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., snap up \$3 and \$4 beers, \$4 cocktails and \$5 glasses of wine. You can chat with other science enthusiasts and maybe find yourself some sort of "we are sad about Pluto" support group — but please avoid fights with anti-Pluto patrons.

WANT MORE themed happy hour ideas? Get a bunch at **Expressnightout.com/happyhours**.

At the very least, the nerdy customers at Science Club will be happy that someone else even remembered poor Pluto's demise.

Want a slightly more obscure way to remember Pluto? Try Pharmacy Bar in Adams Morgan. Not only is it one of the best little spots on 18th Street, but as Pluto was once a planet and still retains the trappings of planethood, Pharmacy Bar's decor reflects its former life as, well, a pharmacy — witness the pill bottles and capsules decorating the walls and tables. Make sure to take advantage of the \$3 beers (from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.) and the awesome jukebox.

If you're still too, um, preoccupied with Pluto to go to work the next day, take the morning off and go visit the Voyage exhibit on the National Mall. It shows you a scale model of the solar system, including everyone's favorite little non-planet. FIONA ZUBLIN (EXPRESS)

- → Science Club, 1136 19th St. NW; 202-775-0747. (Dupont Circle)
- → Pharmacy Bar, 2337 18th St. NW; 202-483-1200. (Woodley Park)

thescene



Date: Dancing, Drinking, Dining

some People Don't handle stress well, especially the stress of something like Valentine's Day. All the pressure to be extra-romantic can cause fights and slammed doors and abbreviated dates. If this happened to you, don't be ashamed. Just make up for it this weekend with an awesome date on a night when not everyone else in the universe will be doing exactly the same thing.

MOMIX, a legendary dance troupe that specializes in trompe l'oeil stage pictures, is cool enough that even people who don't care about "the dance" can be awed by it. The group's performing at the Warner Theatre (513 13th St. NW; 202-533-1868) Friday and Saturday night, so pick up a couple tickets and make it a date.

Most restaurants downtown are either cheap sandwich places or incredibly ritzy restaurants. We'll direct you toward the latter, since this is a date. Ten Penh (1001 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; 202-393-4500) serves some of the most sophisticated Asian plates in D.C., so bite the bullet and make reservations. It's all in the name of romance, right?

If you're not too tired post-show, walk over to Seventh Street and descend into Rocket Bar (714 Seventh St. NW; 202-628-7665), where you can play pool and shuffleboard to your heart's content. After an upscale date night, you and your significant other will want to unwind with some honest, blue-collar pastimes, and this is just the place.

Explore our searchable list of the area's events, venues, restaurants and movies at **Expressnightout.com/thescene**.

topstops



Secret Intelligence Man

In his book "Intelligence and How to Get It," Richard Nisbett is out to prove that there's no excuse for children to not be smarter than their parents as long as the societal factors are optimal. If you'd like to hear more, see the author Politics and Prose tonight. F.Z.

→ Politics and Prose, 5015 Connecticut Ave. NW; 7 p.m., free; 202-364-1919. (Van Ness)

Lady Day

If you're in a lot of emotional pain lately — post-Valentine's Day depression, seasonal affective disorder, economic slump, whatever — take a minute for a woman who lived through her fair share of misery and who sang it all out: Billie Holiday. In honor of Black History Month, the Smithsonian will be screening "Lady Sings the Blues," the epic biopic starring Diana Ross as Lady Day. Go for the jazz and stay for the melodrama. F.Z.

→ McEvoy Auditorium, National Portrait Gallery, Eighth and F streets NW; 7 p.m., free; 202-633-8520. (Gallery Place)





Modern Myth

If you've been paying attention to D.C.'s theater scene recently, you know that Sarah Ruhl is all the rage. "Eurydice," her adaptation of the Orpheus myth, is a sad, quirky tale of Eurydice's trip to the Underworld and Orpheus' failed attempt to find her.

This is a remounting of a wonderful show that was produced at Georgetown University a couple years ago. Local actor Harry Winter stands out as Eurydice's dead father, who helps her adjust to life in Hades. F.Z.

Round House Theatre, 4545 East

→ Round House Theatre, 4545 Eas West Highway, Bethesda; through March 1, \$25-\$60; 240-644-1100. (Bethesda)

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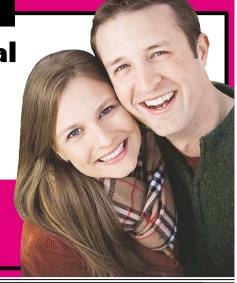
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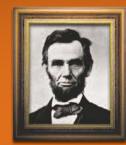
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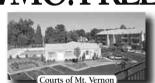
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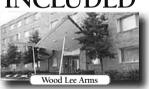
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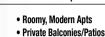
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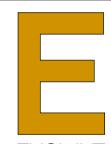
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M/F, 301-220-1613

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Mercedes-Benz 1997 C-Class — C230, \$4950, 108k mi, Smkd Slvr ext, Java in, 4 dr, aloy whls, Sun&mnrf, Cas, MB svcd, 804-878-2170

Volvo 2005 XC90 — 2.5T, \$15,600 obo, Excellent cond, 68k mi, Charcoal int, Silver ext, 4 dr, Htd Seats, DVD, 202-641-7983



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NSIDE

Hayek weds on Valentine's Day | 38



Blog Log: Shaq's All-Star Game moves | **36**

Discussions: de Moraes on 'Private Practice' | **36**

Culture

Censors seek to keep TV free of skin for Afghanistan's viewers

The young Afghan woman in a headscarf spends all day staring at other women's bodies and Hindu idols on her computer screen and then covering them up.

It's Laila Rastagar's job to turn Indian and Korean soap operas into family viewing in Afghanistan. Dual flat-screen monitors illuminate the 22-year-old's face in the dark cubicle as she draws a blurry square with her mouse to obscure a collarbone, then a kneecap, then a Buddha statue.

She's one of a crew of such editors employed by Tolo TV, Afghanistan's most popular station, to censor shows in an attempt to balance its programming at the intersection of radical Islam, traditional values and the West.

Television has flourished in Afghanistan since the Taliban regime was ousted in 2001. Eleven private stations and one state channel now broadcast in the capital. More than 80 percent of city residents own televisions, along with more than 20 percent of rural dwellers, according to the Asia Foundation.

But in recent years, government regulators have gone after more Afghan TV stations for their content, reflecting an increasing desire to control Afghan culture as extremist violence has worsened. Some stations have gone more conservative and others more defiant as the culture war builds over what's legal and what's Afghan. The baseline of acceptability can be hard to define in a country that has swung from miniskirted university students in the 1970s to mandatory burgas under the Taliban and now is trying to settle somewhere in between.

TVS TAKE HOLD

Television has flourished in Afghanistan since the Taliban regime was ousted in 2001:

80+

The percentage of city residents who own televisions, according to the Asia Foundation. More than 20 percent of rural residents have TVs.



The number of private stations broadcast in the capital. There is one state channel.



SCREEN TIME: Women are seen dancing in a televised program shown on units for sale at a shop in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Television Under Cover



Afghan men eat lunch at a restaurant in Kabul, Afghanistan, while an Indian movie plays in the background. Televisions have become commonplace in the country.

Tolo TV removes what it thinks will spark anger. Uncovered knees and low necklines are off-limits, along with the nape of the neck, the upper back, the sliver of stomach left exposed by an Indian sari, teens dancing together in a disco

and a kiss on the cheek. References to religions other than Islam are blotted out.

Tolo TV, with its 60 percent market share, plays a key role in defining Afghanistan's contemporary culture. The channel has grabbed You can see the

same thing on a DVD or through a satellite dish. We're just showing the original as it was made."

NAJIBULLAH KABULI, EMROSE TV

viewers with locally produced news and entertainment, winning people away from cheap pirated DVDs of American and Indian movies.

There's a pervading sense in Afghanistan that religious violence will break out if the state does not enforce religious conservatism. In other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, censorship of TV programs is common, along with fashion magazines and cosmetic product labels.

Yet some stations are much more liberal with their broadcasts than Tolo. Emrose TV, whose name means "Today," broadcasts foreign music videos and soap operas without any editing or blurring. The station started only nine months ago and has a very small viewership.

"You can see the same thing on a DVD or through a satellite dish. We're just showing the original as it was made," says Najibullah Kabuli, the owner of Emrose. "The state TV shows women singing without headscarves on ... so what's the difference between that and the top of a woman's chest?"

There are two televisions at Babuuwali Restaurant in Kabul, one always tuned to news and the other to entertainment. During lunchtime the owner puts on a DVD of an Indian movie, with nothing blurred out. Many men who come in say it's fine for them to watch, but it's not healthy for their country.

"In our society, people say, 'It's democracy.' ... They use democracy to justify putting anything on TV," says Ramatullah Kamal, a 32-year-old construction worker. "The dancing, the legs — it is against Afghan culture." HEIDI VOGT (AP)

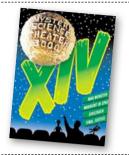
nightout

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TELEVISION

MST @ 20

It's been 20 years since Joel Hodgson created robots out of appliances and started mocking bad movies in real time with "Mystery Science Theater 3000." A new DVD set, "Volume XIV," collects four full-length episodes, and Stephen M. Deusner talked to original cast member Trace Beaulieu. | соміна ир





Alienation, God & School

It's a big week for new DVDs, so our media make-out session continues with reviews of Bill Maher's documentary "Religulous," the comedy "How to Lose Friends and Alienate People" and "High School Musical 3" (you may have heard of this). | COMING UP

From Thursday ...

Log on to see reviews of the latest from Thursday ("Com-mon Existence"), M. Ward ("Hold Time") and Beirut ("March of the Zapotec/Holland"). Also, we have extended versions of Morrissey's "Years of Refusal" and Asobi Seksu's "Hush," plus videos and MP3s. | coming up



policenter RESULTS FROM FRIDAY'S QUESTION

WHO CAME OFF LOOKING WORSE DURING JOAQUIN PHOENIX'S 'LATE SHOW' INTERVIEW?

PHOENIX 82%

LETTERMAN 18%



"I can only hope Phoenix's behavior was meant to be schtick. From the look of things, he may be headed for the same demise as [his late brother] River."

COMMENTER BRAD2, RESPONDING TO FRIDAY'S POLL CENTER QUESTION, "WHO CAME OFF LOOKING WORSE DURING JOAQUIN PHOENIX'S 'LATE SHOW' INTERVIEW?



stunt, and it's getting more attention than imagined."

COMMENTER RON THE DON, WHO ADDED, "I THOUGHT FARRAH FAWCETT'S MELTDOWN ON LETTERMAN COULDN'T BE TOPPED. BOY. I WAS WRONG!



a PR angle not yet fully explored by celebrity - stoned and hairy. It seems to be working."

COMMENTER ALFIE, WHO ADDED, "LOOK AT ALL THE ATTENTION HE'S GETTING, WHETHER IT'S REAL OR NOT. ONLY TIME WILL TELL.



"Those who still feel like supporting working mothers and college girls can still visit 'Good Guys' across the street, which [is] better anyway."

DCMUD.BLOGSPOT.COM RELAYS NEWS THAT D.C. HAS CONSENTED TO A RAZE ORDER FOR THE



"The NBA would be so [much more] enjoyable if every introduction to every game were handled in a similar fashion."

A COMMENTER AT DEADSPIN.COM WAS AMUSED BY SHAQUULE O'NEAL'S DANCE ROUTINE WITH THE JABBAWOCKEEZ AT THE 58TH NBA ALL-STAR GAME IN PHOENIX, ARIZ., SUNDAY NIGHT



"How did I — a perfectly single, decent, educated, politically active, funny, straight-teethed, non-drug-taking, 26-year-old gal spend Valentine's Day? Alone. I watched romantic comedies on TV all dav."

LIFEASLIST.BLOGSPOT.COM WASN'T ALL THAT ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED OVER THE HOLIDAY WEEKEND

"IT MAKES ME mad that news crews will show up at Cardozo [High School] to film kids beating the crap out of each other but can't be bothered to report on the institutional violence that takes place every single day in our city's poorest schools."

URBANSCHOOLNIGHTMARE.BLOGSPOT.COM THINKS THE MEDIA GLORIFY SCHOOL VIO-LENCE WHILE DODGING THE LARGER ISSUES

Discussions

The TV Column

Post columnist LISA DE MORAES was online Friday and talked about the NBC interview with "Octomom" Nadya Suleman, "Private Practice's" lack of character and how she feels about Katie Couric's "flirtation" with Lil Wayne.

I'm horrified that "Octomom" got a platform to spew her dangerous, delusional drivel. I'm horrified that nearly 12 million people watched her. I'm proud of myself for being horrified.

I'm frankly surprised it didn't get a bigger audience. Maybe she should not have gone with NBC — especially if her goal was to drive as many people as possible to her Web site soliciting donations for herself and her children.

During the "Grey's Anatomy "/"Private Practice" crossover episodes, I realized just how boring "Private Practice" is! Watching it separately, it's OK, but every time they left Seattle, I was bored with what was happening. Oh — and I love the new guy (whose name I cannot remember). His character seems to have a bit more depth to him, but I am afraid that they'll change him soon enough into something not as interesting.

I think you're talking about Grant Show. And yes, it says a lot about a show — and not in a good way when Grant Show, aka hot Melrose Place Guy, is the actor with the most in-depth character.

What is the deal with Katie Couric's crush on Lil Wayne?

It's sweet — they went bowling,

for goodness' sake. What's wrong with that?

Have you seen the commercial on Fox for "Dollhouse" and the Sarah Connor show? It's done in a fake 1970s grindhouse style. Didn't Fox get the memo that the Tarantino/ Rodriguez double feature was a flop because no one even remembers the 1970s?

And yet, TV connoisseurs are wetting their pants over the fabulousness of those ads. Personally, I think they're kinda fun. At least people are writing about it. And, when you've slapped a show on Friday nights — aka death by time slot — you need all the free publicity you can get.

TODAY ON DISCUSSIONS: Post columnist Gene Weingarten

answers your questions about his column, "Below the Beltway," at noon. washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Bizarro | Dan Piraro

Melancholy Wolf must have been rolling in the Prozac flowers. Wille

Cornered | Mike Baldwin

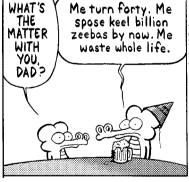


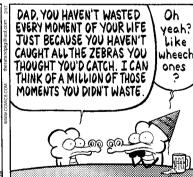
"If it pleases the court, my client would like a second opinion."

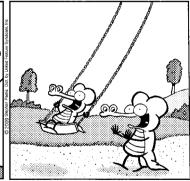
Pooch Cafe | Paul Gilligan



Pearls Before Swine | Stephan Pastis







The Duplex | Glenn McCoy







Horoscope

By Stella Wilder

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You can't avoid all dangers, but you can certainly minimize any long-term effects of those vou do encounter.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) You can have what you call a good day - one that begins and ends with your enjoying personal freedom and control over vour affairs.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Once again, you are likely to find yourself a little bit behind — but you can work swiftly to catch up, provided you know what is left undone.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) A promise comes your way from someone who has broken a few promises to you in the past. Don't let that taint your feel-

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You may be overheard saving the wrong thing to the wrong person, so there's no going back. Instead, avoid saying it in the first place.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You don't want someone in authority to think that you haven't grown over the past several weeks or months. Demonstrate what you've learned.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You may have trouble fitting a big idea into the usual small amount of time. You'll require some breathing room this time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) It's quality that matters, not quantity—and yet you don't want to come up lacking when all is said and done. Balance is the key.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You're going to have to follow the rules, or you're going to be penalized. You know what it means to play fair; do so.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You'll get a clearer glimpse into the workings of your heart and mind, and, as a result, you can make a few key personal changes

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Be sure to give yourself time to reflect. Don't make the mistake of working nonstop; breaks are necessary

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Even the most mundane of routines can provide you with a good deal of satisfaction. What's important is that you are thorough.

Letters

Tax Cuts Aren't the Solution

A POLL CENTER responder Thursday said that if the government suspended taxation for a year, the economy would recover. The argument: If taxation stopped, private industry would have more money,

and, theoretically, would spend more. But it ignores the fact that the government would have to cut spending or borrow money, siphoning money from the economy that would otherwise be invested in the private sector. Tax cuts do not create money; they move it from one pocket to another.

> -HAL SCHWARTZ Gaithers burg, Md.

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Today in History

The U.S. House of Rep-1801 resentatives breaks an electoral tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, electing Jefferson president; Burr becomes vice president.

1865 Columbia, S.C., burns as the Confederates evacuate and Union forces move in. (It's not clear which side set the blaze.)

Chiricahua Apache lead-1909 Chiricanua Apacite leau-er Geronimo (also known as Goyathlay, "One Who Yawns") dies at Fort Sill, Okla., at age 79.

President Richard M. Nixon departed on his historic



Nixon, right, shares a meal in China.

trip to China.

1999 In a saterite-inited address to college cam-In a satellite-linked $puses\,across\,the\,country, President\,Bill$ Clinton makes his case for shoring up Social Security and Medicare.



People



We have a feeling she's not into ABBA.

Mamma M.I.A.. There She Goes Again, My, My, Etc.

M.I.A., the Grammy- and Oscar-nominated rapper, has announced on her MySpace blog that she has given birth to a son. The rapper wrote Saturday that her baby is "healthy, fine, beautiful" and the most amazing thing on this planet. (AP)

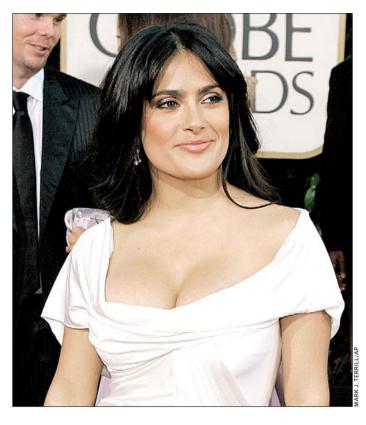
CENSORSHIP

'We'll Save It for the U.S. -**Anything Flies Over There'**

JACKIE CHAN is starring in a new movie, "Shiniuku Incident," that is so violent that its director, Derek Yee, decided not to release it in mainland China, which doesn't have a film ratings system. (AP)

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First Comes Baby

Then comes marriage! SALMA HAYEK picked a romance lover's ideal time and place for her wedding: Valentine's Day in Paris. The actress wed French magnate FRANCOIS-HENRI PINAULT in a civil ceremony Saturday. The two met in 2006, announced their engagement and had a baby, Valentina Paloma, in 2007. Last year, they broke off their engagement but made up shortly thereafter. (AP)

A-LISTER

Meanwhile, **Joey Fatone Continues to Weep Softly In a Corner**

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

wins style props in the March issue of GQ magazine. The magazine picked the entertainer to lead a list of the "10 Most Stylish Men in America." It singled out Timberlake, who launched his clothing line William 'N Sync was a stepping stone to his real career.

Rast several years ago, for his impact on fashion, willingness to take risks and "knack for targeting trends" such as hats, threepiece suits, skinny ties and beards. Other "Stylish Men" include Kanye West, T.I., Jason Schwartzman and

STATEMENTS

Brown Apologizes Publicly

CHRIS BROWN, who was arrested a week ago in connection with a domestic violence investigation, said Sunday he is "sorry and saddened" by what happened and is seeking counseling from his pastor. The singer also said much of what



hotelier Andre Balazs. (AP)

has been reported of the incident is untrue, although he did not elaborate. "Words cannot begin to express how sorry

and saddened I am over what transpired," Brown said. (AP)

RELIFE

Despite Good Chemistry, Jonas Brothers Not Invited

The White House is planning a concert this month to honor STE-VIE WONDER, whose music made up part of President Obama's campaign soundtrack. The president and first lady Michelle Obama will present Wonder with a Library of Congress award on Feb. 25. (AP)



"As long I don't have to sing with those strange boys from the Grammys."

5 Day Forecast for the Washington Area Tonight









46° / 38°





Thursday



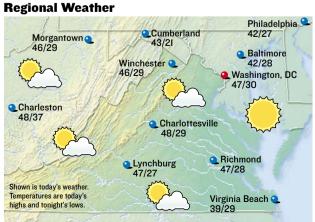
40° / 27°





41° / 31°

47°



Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2009

Almanac

Washington, D.C., through 4 p.m. Mon. Temperature

High	41°
Low	32°
Normal high	47°
Normal low	30°
Average humidity	43%

washingtonpost.com/weather

Regional Forecast

D.C. Metro: Today, mostly sunny. High 47. Wind west 4-8 mph. Tonight, increasingly cloudy. Low 30. Wind south 4-8 mph. Wednesday, mostly cloudy, rain

Sun and Moon

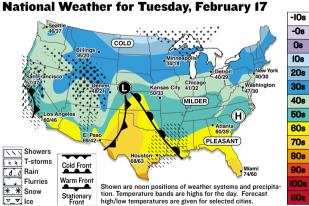
Sunrise today	
Sunset tonight	5:48 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:50 a.m.
Moonset today	II:03 a.m.
Moonset today	II:U3 a.m







Mar IO



trlanta 60/39/s 59/42/t 38/35/c 41/18/sn 34/25/s 38/35/c Athens 50/40/pc 48/41/pc 41/32/c 41/18/sn 48/21/c 40/17/c Buenos Aires 93/72/s 93/73/s 40/18/c 40/17/c Calgary 26/7/pc 28/14/pc os Angeles 60/46/sh 66/48/s Geneva 35/31/sn 35/22/s flamb 74/60/s 77/65/s 40/18/c 68/50/s 77/59/pc 19/18/c 68/50/s 77/59/pc 19/18/c 68/50/s 77/59/pc 19/18/c	vationai	Cities	es World Cities			
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Cydney 10/00/1 11/00/1				Rome	50/37/pc	45/32/pc
eattle 46/37/pc 50/37/pc Tokyo 46/36/pc 48/34/p	Irlando			Sydney	75/68/r	77/68/r
	eattle	46/37/pc	50/37/pc	Tokyo	46/36/pc	48/34/p

s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow. i-ice



CROSSWORD | PLAYING THE BLUES

ACROSS

1 Obvious aftereffects 6 "You've Got a Friend 10 Suits' deas. 14 "Give - don't pollute!" 15 Type of miss

16 "Verrrrrry interesting" Johnson 17 Cocoon

constructor 18 Rush hour 20 Clapton classic 22 Crack team? 23 es Salaam.

Tanzania 24 Trial evidence sometimes

(unanimously) 28 Cobra's "Watch

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briefly

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13 "Didn't I tell you?"

19 Antiquated

26 Lofty poem

30 Pi, for one

32 John's love

27 Stiff-board link

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47 Basket-maker

48 Frankfurter

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58 Sweet or skilled New York" author 60 Flee hastily 61 More than displeasure

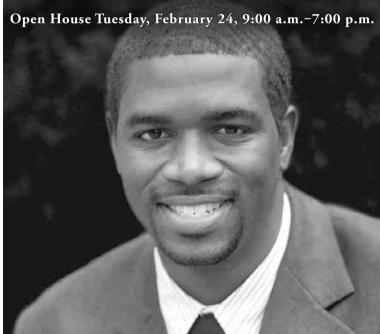
Multiple Sclerosis Research Study

A Market Research firm in Bethesda. MD is seeking Multiple Sclerosis patients to discuss their personal experience living with MS. We are looking for your opinions. There will be no sales efforts involved. If you qualify for the study, you will participate in an interview, and you will be paid for your time. The study is being held on Thursday, February 19, 2009.

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SUDOKU | MEDIUM

Fill in the boxes so each row, column and 3-by-3 square includes the digits I through 9. See www.sudoku.com for solution, tips and computer program.

Need more Suldoku?

Find another Sudoku puzzle in the Comics section of the Post every Sunday and in the Style section Monday through Saturday.

Friday's Solution

3	5	7	6	1	8	4	2	9
6	2	4	5	3	9	8	7	1
1	8	9	2	4	7	3	6	5
5	4	8	7	2	3	1	9	6
2	1	3	4	9	6	7	5	8
9	7	6	1	8	5	2	4	3
8	6	5	3	7	2	9	1	4
7	3	1	9	5	4	6	8	2
4	9	2	8	6	1	5	3	7

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Friday's Solution

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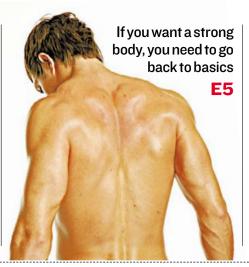


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Slurp up veggies with the help of D.C.'s Soupergirl **E6**





How to prevent suffering from mall madness E7

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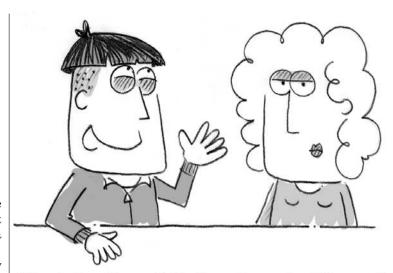
First Break Up, Then Make Up

I ended things with a girlfriend last week.
Now I am majorly regretting it but don't want to beg her to come back. Tell me what you can about reversing the damage. – HELP, PLEASE

I guess I first need to know the damage — was it the equivalent of two toddlers unchecked with a Spin Art machine?

"Ending things" can carry vastly different meanings for people — and sometimes those people were inhabiting the same relationship. If you did anything that can even remotely accurately be called "dumping" her, then it gets trickier.

To her, you'd have to address why you did it, how you understand her hurt and confusion, and why it won't happen again. But to yourself, I urge you to ask the same questions even more carefully. Just because you feel bad after a breakup doesn't mean the relationship was meant to keep going: Surgery can hurt,



"Break-Up with you..? You're so funny. I said I wanted to 'Make-Sup with you'. That's street for 'Dinner'."

ERIC REEC

even when it heals you.

And how are you sure the same things that made you pull the plug won't crop up again in a week or a month? You can hedge your bets by maintaining contact in a friendly way and see where it goes, but realize that it might be unfair to her if she wants to move forward. In short, be honest — with her and with yourself.

Work To Do on Your Marriage



My husband has recently been laid off like many Americans, I am well aware. We are

OK with my salary for now and are doing OK. The problem is, I have

been feeling very negatively toward him lately. My resentment is building, and I am frustrated with him in a lot of ways. I don't seem to be as attracted to him as I used to be. All the things that used to bother me a little now bother me a lot: how he can be lazy, how he's not very social, how he gets defensive about a lot of things. Now all of these are getting in the way of his finding a new job, and I'm fed up. I admit that I have thought about leaving him, but then I feel guilty because I know the layoff wasn't his fault. Still, I'm wondering whether it's a wake-up call for me.

- AGGRAVATED WIFE, VA.

It just might be. Or, it could be an understandable reaction to a stressful time. Or maybe just bad meatloaf.

The economic crisis is often talked about with macro terms and dry statistics. But beneath all that is the very real, messy toll that it has taken on marriages and families.

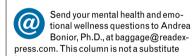
Is your resentment something new and reversible, borne out of the stress of suddenly becoming the sole breadwinner and seeing all his lesser personality characteristics blown up with the large-scale projector of anxiety and frustration? If you can't recall feeling nearly this bothered before, I'm voting for that possibility.

But maybe these resentments were simmering under the surface for quite a bit longer, and the circumstances have just given you more permission to be open about them.

Couples counseling could help. But even with all the low-cost options available out there (community mental health clinics, university training centers, insurance options, EAPs), I understand that might seem difficult to take on right now.

At the very least, you need to spell out to your husband what's bothering you, and work with him to set some expectations for how to get back on track.

Try to help him a bit more with joint daily goals. Listen to his feelings, too — some of what you describe of him could be associated with depression, which is certainly not going to help anyone's job search.



Do you have PANIC attacks?

Do you have sudden rushes of fear and discomfort that may include palpitations, shortness of breath, trembling, or lightheadedness?

If so, you may be eligible to participate in a treatment study. Participants must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have experienced panic symptoms for more than a month
- Have an available safety-person who may be involved in treatment

Qualified volunteers may be eligible for compensation.

For more information contact:

Anxiety Disorders Research Lab American University, Washington, DC 202-885-1729 • aupanicstudy@gmail.com



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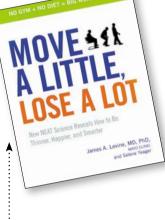
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WEIGHT FOR IT

Dieters should be jealous of the Tanita Ironman BC-350 (\$269.99, Thecompetitiveedge.com): It manages to stay thin and light while being superpowerful. But they'll get over it when they realize the body composition monitor can determine their weight to 0.1 pound. Just don't get too caught up in the numbers.



Your diet soda has no calories. But does it have vitamin E? Not unless you're chugging Diet Cherry 7UP Antioxidant (get a \$1 off coupon at 7up.com), which comes fortified with the anti-aging nutrient. It also comes in non-diet form with high-fructose corn syrup. Healthy!

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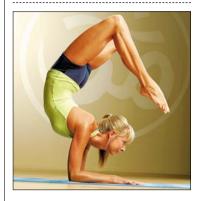
TRIPLE SWEAT

"Octomom" is going to have to run around to care for those eight little ones. She might as well start training with the Baby Jogger Summit 360 Triple (\$999, Arunningstroller. com). The kids will be cozy, thanks to all-wheel independent suspension and a break from 11 siblings.

ONE SMALL STEP

No curling up in bed to read "Move a Little, Lose a Lot" (\$23.95, Crown) — author James Levine wants you standing up and pacing. That's the way to begin NEAT (non-exercise activity thermogenesis) living, burning calories throughout the day rather than in short bursts at the gym.

GUINEA PIG



Perfect Harmony

■ There's a dilemma in the world of yoga fashion — other than the age-old visible panty line issue. How do you deal with a sweaty Bikram practice and manage to wear clothes — or, at least, clothes that won't get totally nasty in 15 minutes and aren't made out of some high-tech unnatural fabric that will leak ickiness into your body?

The answer, the folks at Lucy hope, is their new "cool cotton," featured in the Harmony Collection. It's mostly cotton with a touch of Lycra, so it's flexible and stretchy while still feeling soft against the skin. That is, when it manages to cover any — pictured above are the revealing hot yoga short (\$42) and hot yoga halter (\$42). Other options, including the harmony capri (\$68) and harmony cami (\$48) are a bit more demure.

As for the perspiration test, cool cotton lives up to its name — it became damp but never soggy. And by the next morning, it was dry again and unstinky! But we're not so eco-conscious that we'd skip the washing machine. VICKY HALLETT (EXPRESS)



fit | Phys Ed

THE MISFITS

I recently broke multiple toes in my foot and have to stay off my feet for a few weeks. I should still be able to do some ab and upper-body training. But how can I warm up adequately? Usually, I do IO minutes of a cardio video to warm up.

■ You could warm up using a light weight and go for a high number of reps. Get on the bench, for example, use the standard 45-pound Olympic bar, and do bench presses for a minute at a steady pace. Or set a numerical goal, like sets of 50. You could do the same with lat pull-downs — anything that does not require pressure on the feet. The important point is to use very light resistance and keep the pace up for long enough that the body gets warm. H.S.

I'm in great shape, but I've never been big into flexibility. I just can't get into yoga/

Pilates, but I admit it's embarrassing that I can't reach my toes without bending. I know that cardio, strength and flexibility are the three components of a well-balanced workout, but can you explain why exactly flexibility is important to me?

■ Injury prevention is the biggie. But it's also important for performance — think longer strides. Plenty of people are just fine not being able to touch their toes or doing yoga, but at least do some stretching. It should feel good! (And that's a solid third reason, right?) v.H.

I have been working out my abs, doing cardio and everything to get my stomach toned. It has been working, and I see a

difference. However, there are those love handles that are not exactly on my sides, but more toward my back. I have no idea how to get rid of them.

■ Unless you have the metabolism or willpower to drive your body fat percentage way below the average, some of those little pockets are going to hang around. You can't program your body to dump fat from any particular place, and if that is where your DNA wants to keep its emergency fund, that's where it is going to be. H.S.

The MisFits, Vicky Hallett and Howard Schneider, chat every Tuesday at 11 a.m. at washingtonpost.com/liveonline. Catch up on upcoming events, scientific studies and gym-goers' pet peeves.



Leaders of the PACK

Adoptable dogs give volunteers a run-around at Hains Point park

Feel like you're barking up the wrong tree with your current workout? Unleash your inner athlete by running with the PACK and doing something good for your body and soul.

The Washington Humane Society's PACK — that's the People and Animal Cardio Klub — links volunteers with man's best friend to boost everyone's fitness.

Founded last fall by Tiffany Barrow-Rogers, WHS' chief operating officer, and Kevin Simpson, its director of animal training and behavior, PACK meets every other Saturday at 8:15 a.m. to run a scenic 3-mile loop around East Potomac Park's Hains Point. The weather doesn't matter and neither does your fitness level. Volunteers can run, walk, organize or handle water stations.

They came up with the idea after Barrow-Rodgers moved here from New Hampshire, but her usual running partners (that'd be her dogs) took their sweet time coming south. So, she decided to pick a new buddy from the shelter and settled on "He was visiting them, sniffing them and being very appropriate."

They realized that acclimating the dogs to people and other animals through the runs would help them to show better when potential parents come calling. Thus, PACK was born.

The hounds aren't the only beneficiaries, though. Beyond cardio,

The dogs get a great workout. We get a great workout. Everyone leaves happy and tired."

Spike, a restless pit bull who was becoming belligerent toward his canine counterparts.

After a brisk jog, Spike was a new dog, notes Simpson, who joined them. "Before we were halfway through the run, we noticed that he didn't even care that other dogs were around him," Simpson says. dog lovers get the added happiness of being around and helping pooches.

"I think we all get a lot out of this. It's great interaction," says Dolores Hamilton, a veteran volunteer who struggled to get 6-year-old Snoop, a shepherd mix desperate to dash, to contain his excitement at the Jan. 24

MAN'S BEST FRIEND also makes for a fantastic jogging partner—the one catch is you have to remember to hold onto the leash. But it's not all exercise. The dogs also get to promote their adoptable status and have a chance to be cooed over by friendly volunteers.



run. "The dogs get a great workout. We get a great workout. Everyone leaves happy and tired."

"I love animals," Erin Winograd says, petting 5-year-old Muñeco, a shy mutt sporting the requisite orange "Adopt me" vest and matching collar. "There's obviously a huge homelessness problem for animals and adoptability, so I just wanted to volunteer and see if I can help."

PACK has 30 volunteers, some of whom have adopted their running partners, Barrow-Rogers says. Anyone is welcome to run, but WHS recognizes as official only those who have completed orientation and dog-handling sessions at the shelters before the runs.

On average, WHS houses 25 adoptable pooches, but the size of the PACK varies with the number of people who can chauffeur their furry friends to and from WHS shelters on Georgia Avenue and New York Avenue.

Simpson decides which dogs get to go based on their fitness level and length of time at WHS. Shelter dogs "usually have lots of energy and a lot of time on their paws, so to speak," Simpson says.

See? Sometimes it's not so bad when things go to the dogs. Join the next run, on Feb. 21. (For more details, contact Simpson at Askthetrainer@washhumane.org or 202-723-5730 ext. 122.) STEPHANIE KANOWITZ

A Back-Up Plan

Just because you can't see your back in the mirror doesn't mean it should be neglected

THE BACK OFTEN GETS SHORT SHRIFT when it comes to strength and conditioning because people tend to focus on muscles more prone to easy definition, such as those in the arms, abs and chest. But neglecting this body part can lead to trouble: aches, stiffness and chronic pain. A healthy back is flexible, allowing you to bend, turn and reach without even a twinge. It should also be strong, since it helps stabilize the rest of the body. But because many of us sit all day with shoulders rounded forward, our backs have become weak and stiff. "Having a strong back is huge," says Torri Shack, a trainer at Sky Sport & Spa in Beverly Hills. "The stronger your back, the more weight-bearing exercise you can do. People think your abdominals are just your abdominals, but the stronger your back, the stronger your stomach is going to be."

To help restore backs to their proper shape, we asked three trainers for their favorite back exercises. Jeannine Stein (Los angeles Times)

Gregg Miele

BEVERLY HILLS-BASED TRAINER AND OWNER OF SELFDISCIPLINE.COM

The first is a cat-camel stretch. Start on the floor on all fours and arch your back like a cat, so the back is convex. Then push the stomach toward the floor, making the back concave. Still on all fours, place one arm on your head and bring your elbow up to the ceiling, opening up the back. You should feel a little stretch, but not a great deal of discomfort. This focuses on the upper curvature of the spine and is especially good for people who have rounded shoulders.

Next, do hip circles. Stay on all fours and bring one knee up to the side, keeping it bent at 45 degrees. Pretend you're going over a hurdle, bringing the leg up and over.

For bird dogs, start on all fours and extend the opposite arm and leg, keeping the spine in a neutral position and trying to kick in all those muscle fibers. Bring the elbow to the knee and extend them again.

The squat-to-stand helps strengthen the back. Stand with feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart. Bend over, sliding hands between the legs and, if you can touch your toes, grab them. If you can't, you might have to bend your knees. Then pull up on the toes, bringing the chest up and dropping your butt to the floor. Take a deep breath and straighten up, locking the legs and still holding the toes.

Hip swings are last. Place your hands against a wall and walk back about 3 to 4 feet. Bring one leg in front and, leaning into the wall, swing it side to side, keeping it straight, with toes facing the wall.

Torri Shack

TRAINER, SKY SPORT & SPA, BEVERLY HILLS

My favorite overall back exercise is the front plank. I tell my clients to do it in the morning and before they go to bed. It's really simple, and you can do it anywhere. Facing the floor, support your body up on your lower arms and your toes, and try to hold it for a minute, eventually progressing to a minute 15 seconds, a minute and a half, etc. To create more instability, raise the right leg, then the left leg, holding for 10 seconds. That move strengthens the overall core. The plank helps people begin to increase the weight they lift because they have a stronger back.

The other exercise I like is the Superman, where you lie on your stomach, with hands and legs outstretched. Lift the arms and legs at the same time, hold for 10 seconds, come back down and do it again. Work up to doing sets of those 10-second intervals for a minute. To add more resistance, do this while holding water bottles or cans of soup. This especially targets the lower back.

A more-advanced exercise is dumbbell pullovers on a stability ball. Rest the upper shoulders and head on the ball, and place feet on the floor. Hold one dumbbell with both hands, arms extended overhead, directly over the chest. Squeezing the lats and keeping elbows straight, lower the weight over the head, then bring the weight back up.

Rob Sham

FITNESS MANAGER, BALLY TOTAL FITNESS, CULVER CITY, CALIF.

For an upper-trapezius stretch, sit in a chair facing forward while maintaining good posture. Holding onto the chair with the left arm and gently pull the head toward the right shoulder with the right hand. You should feel a mild stretch, but it shouldn't hurt. Repeat on the other side.

If your shoulders are rounded forward, you need to strengthen those muscles that will pull your shoulders back again. One good exercise is the T-bar row, or a high row. On a machine meant for this exercise (where the weight is on a fulcrum), grab the weight and start pulling it toward your chest with your elbows out to the side.

Dead lifts target the hamstrings and glutes, and incorporate the lower back. It might sound intimidating, but it's a very functional movement. Start with legs bent, making sure the spine is in alignment. The only movement is bending forward at the waist to raise and lower the weight from the ground. If you don't have full range of motion, you don't have to lower the weight all the way to the ground. Always start with light weights.



Week? Just head to Crystal Couture Fit Friday — workout duds from Lululemon, TranquiliT and more will walk the runway, plus you can sample class demos courtesy of Sport & Health, donate used running shoes to Pacers and sip heart-healthy red wine. It's Friday from 6 p.m. to IO p.m. at 2450 Crystal Drive. More info at Crystalcity.org.



BODY TALK

Walk It off Faster

You know you want to walk it off, but should you focus on time, speed or distance? Try all three — being savvy about how you work out can help you shed more pounds. Here's how to build them into your routine.

TIME YOUR WALKS (three-plus days a week): Start by making exercise a habit. Time-based walks are the easiest way to do that. Pick a manageable amount (say, 20 or 30 minutes) and just go at a comfortable pace. Over time, you'll burn more calories with regular walks than a single marathon session. **SPEED IT UP** (one or two days a week): Once you're consistent, sprinkle in

SPEED IT UP (one or two days a week): Once you're consistent, sprinkle in speed. You'll burn 51 percent more calories just by increasing from 3 mph to 4 mph. Rather than trying to sprint through your whole workout, add short



bouts of faster walking — one to five minutes at a time with a few minutes at a moderate pace in between.

GO THE DISTANCE (one day a week): Long walks teach the heart and lungs to pump more oxygen-rich blood with less effort. The result: more energy! Once a week, lengthen your walk by 10 minutes until you're doing an hour or more. CHRIS FREYTAG (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF PREVENTION MAGAZINE © RODALE INC.)

fit | Nutrition

Just a Spoonful of Stevia?

The leaf extract can mimic sugar, but some worry that it's not safe

As white granules rain down on a cup of coffee, words appear across the TV screen: "Sprinkle your coffee with something other than guilt."

Then, the narrator intones: "Try the first great-tasting, zero-calorie, natural sweetener borne from the leaves of the stevia plant. Truvia. Honestly sweet. Find it at your grocery store."

It's not exactly pure spring water, but the newest sugar substitute on the market is generating buzz for its origins in flora rather than in a lab.

The Food and Drug Administration said in December that an extract of stevia was safe to eat, and about the same time, the food-supply giant Cargill Inc. launched the commercial for tabletop packets of Truvia. In coming months, more products with the extract will join a crowded market of diet products that caters to about 194 million American consumers, according to the industry group Calorie Control Council.

The stevia extract used by food makers comes from the leaves of a South American plant in the chrysanthemum family, and it has been consumed for decades in countries outside the U.S., including Japan. This may push some consumers who are wary of other artificial sweeten-



Extract from the stevia plant, in the chrysanthemum family, is coming to a store near you — in sodas, smoothies and more.

The newest sugar substitute is attracting buzz for its origins in flora, not in a lab.

ers, such as saccharin and aspartame, that have in the past drawn questions about their safety.

Still, critics argue that "natural" doesn't necessarily mean healthier. U.S. government officials had maintained a ban on stevia since the 1970s because they were not

convinced that it wasn't toxic. The government agreed the extract used by the food companies was safe after newer tests; Cargill says it has done three years of study. But some fear the sweetener hasn't been properly vetted in the United States, where consumption of sugar substitutes is

higher than in other countries.

But Peter Butko, an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, says substitutes are safe and adds that those who look to sugar as the more natural choice need to realize that unless they are eating sugar

THE SWEET DEAL

- → BRAND NAMES: Truvia, PureVia
- **→ APPROVED**: 2008
- → SAFE TO CONSUME: 12 mgs per kilogram of body weight, or up to 30 packets a day for a 150-pound person
- → NOTES: Stevia, until recently, was available only as a dietary supplement. Some studies showed a link to reproductive problems and other issues, although critics of the studies say the quantities in the studies were more than humans would consume.

SOURCE: CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, THE INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS, NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE. THE FDA AND THE WHO.

beets, they are getting a processed product.

But that is not an endorsement of unrestrained use of sugar substitutes. Splenda, for example, is packaged with agents to make it seem more like sugar, and that makes it almost as calorie-dense as sugar, he said.

Artificial sweeteners are "safe in the amounts we consume them, and I do have Splenda packets at home," Butko said. "But I'm trying to limit it. Everything in moderation, whether it's sugar or Splenda."

MEREDITH COHN (THE BALTIMORE SUN)

Cooking Up a Very Super Bowl

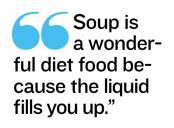
A local soup chef fills her pots with fresh veggies and inventive flavors

You're more likely to see D.C.'s resident Soupergirl donning an apron than a cape, but she's still confronting a formidable challenge: saving your body through soup.

That's right: Sara Polon, 31, runs Soupergirl (Thesoupergirl.com), a made-from-scratch soup delivery business. The power of her stews and bisques lies in their diabolically good-for-you ingredients: seasonal veggies primarily from local farms, with no added cream or butter.

"Our general rule is if your grandmother doesn't recognize something on the ingredient list, it shouldn't be in your food," says Polon, who was inspired by Michael Pollan's "The Omnivore's Dilemma."

Every week, she and her "soupermom" whip up two flavors, such as gingered carrot almond and Caribbean sweet potato. Then, customers can place orders online for pints of their picks and decide whether to have them delivered (for a fee) or to pick them up at one of four



D.C. locations.

And whatever her customers' diets are lacking, Polon promises to have a recipe she can use to come to their rescue. Polon raves about her Farmer's Market in a Bowl soup ("It's like pure winter vegetable goodness," she says), which packs three to four servings of



What's cooking? That's some blackeyed pea and mustard green soup.

fresh vegetables. And her bean-based blends are great for those who want to eat more fiber and protein.

Still, "we don't think you'll notice" that the soups are so good for you, Polon says. She's confident that soup slurpers will see their waistlines shrink, however — Polon says she's lost 10 pounds since she started souping up her diet in November.

"Soup is a wonderful diet food," she says, "because the liquid fills you up. If you sit down to a big bowl of black bean soup or lentil soup, it's [got] fewer calories than a bowl of pasta, and you're going to feel satiated for much longer," thanks to the fiber boost. Sounds like a triumph over hunger. KATIE ABERBACH (EXPRESS)

Wellness | fit

STETHOSCOPE

HAPPINESS

The Greatest Gift

■ Did you get a diamond necklace for Valentine's Day or romantic picnic for two? If you answered the latter, you're sweetie's a smartie, according to a study out of San Francisco State University that found that experiential gifts make people happier than material goods. The theory is that experiences provide you with "memory capital," which can be drawn upon when times are not-so-hot. That is, unless you're close to the poverty line — then possessions get more attractive.



GAMBLING

So Close, Yet So Far

■ Stop complaining that you never get a single number right when you play the lottery. It's the folks who come close to winning who stimulate the part of the brain that makes you want to gamble more — and more, until it becomes a problem—according to a study from the Behavioral and Clinical Neuroscience Institute at the University of Cambridge. The brain registers a near-win as a win, even though you're technically a loser. And that encourages you to keep going.

ACHES

Pain Strikes Back

■ The economy might be in a downturn, but low-back pain is riding high these days. According to a study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, the number of North Carolina residents who reported debilitating, chronic back pain rose from 3.9 percent in the early 1990s to 10.2 percent in 2006. Two things that might be driving the numbers: the obesity epidemic and depression, which has been linked with back pain.

Trouble Stopping Shopping

'Confessions' isn't all laughs — buying can be a serious disease

Compulsive shopping has always been among the most socially acceptable of self-destructive behaviors. After all, instead of a hangover or threats from your drug dealer, you end up with lots of cute designer bags!

"Shopaholics are still referred to in a tongue-in-cheek way," says Terrence Shulman of the Shulman Center for Compulsive Theft and Spending. Hence why the new flick "Confessions of a Shopaholic" — based on the best-selling chick-lit series about Rebecca Bloomwood, a label-loving young journalist with mounting credit card debt — probably won't draw many comparisons to, say, "Leaving Las Vegas."

But while the film giddily namedrops designers and outfits star Isla Fisher in an endless wardrobe of sparkly, shiny eye candy, it doesn't obscure the fact that she has an actual disease: compulsive buying disorder (CBD).

An estimated 17 million Americans are compulsive shoppers or spenders, according to a 2006 Stanford University study. And that number is about equally split between men and women, busting the assumption that it's strictly a female trouble.

The disorder usually develops in a person's late teens or early 20s, or around the time a person gets his or her first credit card, according to the journal World Psychiatry. Compulsive buyers describe the act of shopping as incredibly exciting, the journal notes, and it can even involve a "sexual feeling." But after the purchase is completed, shoppers often feel let down or disappointed in themselves. In other words, shopping is a bit like a onenight stand.

There's a big difference between having a penchant for shopping and having an outright compulsion. Compulsive shoppers — who often have racks of clothing with the tags still on — buy to get a high from shopping, and they are often in denial about their problem,



"Confessions" Rebecca Bloomwood is the typical romantic comedy lead, but she has a disease: compulsive buying disorder.



according to professor Ruth Engs of Indiana University. If family and friends complain about their spending, compulsive buyers tend to hide their purchases or take on an extra job to pay their mounting bills.

Of course, in this economy, those options aren't as feasible. So, some sufferers are "getting an economic slap in the face" and temporarily cutting back on spending, Shul-

man says — although this should not be confused with healing their addiction.

But as credit card debt has become a national concern, the silver lining, says psychologist April Benson, author of "To Buy or Not To Buy," is that some with CBD no longer feel as isolated and are more willing to seek treatment.

She's noticed an uptick in visitors

to online support groups and to her Web site, Stoppingovershopping. com. "People are more comfortable seeking help now," Benson says.

Many others, however, are coping with the stressful fiscal environment by continuing to shop or even going into hyperdrive.

The Shulman Center suggests that compulsive shoppers try to reduce temptations, cut up their credit cards and make lists before going to the store so they buy only what they need. If problems continue, it's time for professional help.

Capital Area Debtors Anonymous (Capitalareadebtors.org) offers a Compulsive Spending and Tools meeting, and social worker Kelley Donovan is starting an overshoppers group in Tysons Corner based on Benson's treatment program. For more information, call 703-939-7724.

Is it ironic that help is available in the land of shopping malls? Maybe not, if curtailing spending becomes as hot as a pair of Gucci boots. As Shulman adds, "Conspicuous consumption is so 2007." COLLEEN EGAN



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